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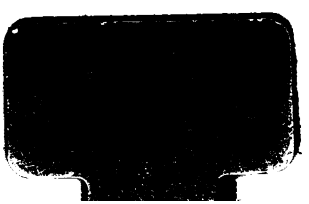

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WESLEY

AND

HIS COADJUTORS.

BY

REV. WM. C. LARRABEE, A. M.

EDITED BY

REV. B. F. TEFFT, D. D.

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CHARLES WESLEY.

CHARLES WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE OF CHARLES WESLEY.

Early Boyhood.

OF the coadjutors of John Wesley, decidedly the first, both in time and in efficiency, was his brother Charles, who was born in 1708. In childhood, he was subject, under his mother's hand, to the admirable discipline we have fully described in the "Life of John Wesley." When he was eight years old, he was sent to the Westminster school, where he was placed under the special care of his brother Samuel, then one of the teachers in that institution. His expenses were defrayed by Samuel for about five years, when he was admitted as one of the King's scholars; and from that time his expenses were borne by the public funds of the seminary. At the age of eighteen, he entered Christ Church College, Oxford.

The only incident in the life of Charles, and not related in the "Life" of John, occurring up to

the time of his entering, and, in fact, of his leaving the University of Oxford, is a very striking illustration of the control which Providence exerts over the events of human life—events apparently contingent on the decisions of individual minds. While Charles Wesley was a boy at the Westminster school, Mr. Garret Wesley, of Ireland—a gentleman of large fortune—wrote to Samuel Wesley, father of Charles, inquiring if he had a son named Charles, stating that he was desirous of finding some Charles Wesley, to adopt as his heir. Some time after this, a gentleman, unknown to the Wesley family, but supposed to be Mr. Garret Wesley himself, called upon Charles, and held with him long and interesting interviews, which led to a distinct proposition, for him to go to Ireland, and become heir of the wealthy family bearing his own name. Charles wrote to his father for advice. The good man, like a wise father, and a firm believer in Providence, referred the decision of the whole question to his son's own choice, trusting that God would direct him. Charles, after mature reflection, decided, for reasons of which no record is made, to decline the very honorable position and munificent fortune offered him, and to

remain, a poor scholar, at the Westminster Academy.

Momentous were the consequences of this decision. Mr. Garret Wesley, on the failure of his cherished hope of Charles, adopted a kinsman—Richard Colley—who took the name of Wesley, and who was the grandfather of the Marquis of Wellesley, the conqueror of India, and of the Duke of Wellington, the conqueror of Napoleon. Had Charles Wesley accepted that offer, the extension of the British empire in the east might never have occurred, the battle of Waterloo might never have been fought, and the Methodist societies might never have been founded. Or, if these grand events had been still essential parts of the plan of Providence, other men than the Marquis of Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, and Charles Wesley would have been the means of accomplishing them.

We have related, in the "Life of John Wesley," the principal events of interest in the life of Charles. We have seen that he was, in fact, the founder of the Oxford society of Methodists. We have mentioned him as college tutor, after he received his collegiate degree. He intended to remain through life in the employment of college instruction, and had declined ordination

as a clergyman. But when John made up his mind to go to Georgia on a mission, Charles determined to go with him, and, therefore, consented to receive holy orders. On arriving in America, the brothers separated, for different stations. The office of Charles was twofold—missionary to the people, and secretary to the Governor. Governor Oglethorpe having fixed his residence at Frederica—one hundred miles south of Savannah—Charles accompanied him. On arriving at Frederica, he entered the same day on his duty as minister of the Gospel. He held, for the accommodation of those who were able and desirous to attend, four religious services every day. He was faithful in pastoral labor, and efficient in Church discipline. But his efforts to do good were wholly unavailing. His failure resulted from the same causes which operated so much to the disadvantage of John, at Savannah. The population with which Charles had to deal, at Frederica, were, if possible, a harder set of customers than the parishioners of John, at Savannah. They even went so far as to attempt the assassination of their missionary. Some miscreant fired at him, walking alone, in the woods, but missed him. Not succeeding in getting up their courage for a

second attempt at assassination, they attempted to ruin him in the good opinion of the Governor, in whose employ he was, and on whom he was wholly dependent for all means of living in the colony. By charging him with attempting to induce the people to leave the colony, they so far succeeded in operating to his prejudice in the mind of the Governor, as to subject him to the most cruel treatment.

Having gone to America in the employment of the Governor, as his secretary, he had made no provision for his own support, bringing nothing from England but his clothes and books. On asking a servant of the Governor one day for some article, he was informed that orders had been given forbidding his using any of Mr. Oglethorpe's things. Having slept on the damp ground for some time, in a tent, and asking for some boards, which happened to be at disposal, to lie upon, he was rudely refused, and the boards given to others. As soon as it was known that he had fallen under the displeasure of the Governor, he began to be abused by the worthless sycophants of the colony, and slighted and avoided by the timid and time-serving. Had he been a fallen minister of state, he could not, he thought, be more

trampled on; and he began really to entertain quite a good opinion of his "own considerableness."

His ill-treatment, physical exposure, and mental distress, threw him into a fever. In his extreme destitution of every help and convenience, he thought he must soon die. But after lying on the ground, in a tent, alone and helpless, all day, at evening he was visited by two of those angels of mercy, whom not even the fear of obloquy and reproach can keep away from scenes of sickness and suffering. Mrs. Hird and Mrs. Robinson—blessed be their names!—came and offered all the assistance in their power. He thanked them for their kindness; but told them he could not desire them, by taking any notice of him—under the displeasure of the Governor and the people as he was—to excite prejudice against themselves. They, however, persisted in their kind and tender attentions, regardless of the Governor, and the walking shadows that followed him in his unreasonable prejudices. Under their careful treatment, he was so improved, as to be able the next day to attend the burial of a poor man, who had been killed by the bursting of a cannon. As he closed the burial service, and saw

the earth heaped up over the dead, he even envied the poor man the peaceful and quiet grave, where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." Returning to his comfortless abode, he succeeded in obtaining the bedstead on which the man had died; but the next day the Governor took it away from him, and refused him the aid of one of the carpenters to mend up another. He now grew worse, and would have died, but for the aid of the good Samaritans, who would not abandon him in his humiliation and distress.

His situation was most distressing. He was sick, utterly destitute of all comforts, surrounded by enemies and false accusers, and rendered still more unhappy by his poetic temperament, and highly-sensitive nature. He was sick—sick at heart—and would gladly welcome the grave, in which his aching head might be at rest, and his crushed heart throb no more. From this state of mind he was suddenly aroused, by the arrival of his brother, from Savannah. He related—in the Latin language, that the informers and eaves-droppers around might be none the wiser—the story of his sufferings and difficulties to John. An interview was held between John and the Governor.

Little is known of the particulars of that interview; but it would appear, from a few hints in the Journal of Charles, that John dealt with the Governor in plain language. Soon after the return of John to Savannah, the Governor sent for Charles, and a mutual reconciliation was effected. The Governor expressed regret that he had suffered himself to be misled by false accusations against Charles, and to be induced by prejudice and passion to treat him so badly. Charles was generous and magnanimous, and the Governor and secretary were again friends.

Mr. Oglethorpe then informed Charles Wesley, that he had learned the Spaniards were hovering, in three ships of war, about the mouth of the river, ready to make a descent upon the coast. He must go to meet them, and defend the colony. He had a gloomy foreboding of misfortune—a sad presentiment of approaching death. He never expected to return, nor to see him again. He then gave him a diamond ring, and directed him, on returning to England, to carry it to Mr. Vernon, who was a friend to be depended on, and whose influence was great. On receiving that ring, Mr. Vernon would do for the Wesley family any thing in his power.

Wesley received the ring, but said he should never use it for himself, as he neither expected nor desired preferment, or the honors and riches of earth. The reconciliation was complete, and the passionate, yet worthy Governor, and the impulsive, sensitive, and conscientious secretary and clergyman, parted friends, warm, devoted, and generous as ever, expecting never to meet again. In a few days, however, Governor Oglethorpe, contrary to his presentiments, returned safe to Savannah, the Spaniards having failed, through contrary winds, to effect a landing. Wesley met him joyfully, and gave him back the ring. The Governor ordered him every thing he could think he wanted, and promised to have a house immediately built for him. On the return of the Governor's favor, Wesley was annoyed by the provoking civilities of the fickle people, who had been so ready, in his humiliation, to give him a shove down the hill.

In a few days his duties as secretary of state required his presence in Savannah. He left Frederica, glad to get away from a place where he had so piteously suffered. Soon after his arrival at Savannah, it was found necessary for him to proceed to England, as bearer of dis-

patches from the Governor to the Trustees of the colony. In August, 1736, he embarked at Charleston, South Carolina, on board a ship for England. The ship proved wholly unseaworthy, and the captain a worthless, miserable drunkard. The seamen, after doing their best at the pumps to keep the ship afloat, and running imminent risk of destruction along the coast, compelled the senseless captain to put into Boston, for repairs. While the ship was detained for repairing, Mr. Wesley was lying most of the time sick of fever and diarrhea, with which he had been frequently and dangerously afflicted during his residence in the south. He found, however, Boston a place altogether different from Frederica or Savannah. He was treated with surpassing kindness by the citizens and physicians both of Boston and of its neighboring village—Charlestown. When the ship was ready, Mr. Wesley was earnestly advised, both by his physicians and friends, not to venture a passage to England, in his feeble condition and precarious health. But he said that dispatches, important to the interest of the colony, were intrusted to him, and go he must. He, however, refused to enter the ship so long as the drunken captain was in command. The proper

authorities, therefore, deposed the unworthy commander, and placed the ship in charge of another man, who proved to be intelligent, obliging, and capable. The ship, however, proved still rickety, leaky, and wholly unfit to endure the storm of the Atlantic, especially during the boisterous months of October and November. Yet with watchful and unremitting labor of captain and sailors, all arrived safe in England on the 3d of December.

Having performed the service for which he returned to England, Mr. Wesley resigned his office as secretary of the colony of Georgia, with the design of returning to America as a missionary, unincumbered with secular and political duties. The time for his embarkation was even appointed. But when the time arrived, he was lying, confined to his bed, by severe illness. The ship sailed without him; and before another opportunity occurred, his brother John arrived in England, and other circumstances occurred, which gave another direction to the labors of the learned and pious brothers. None but an infidel would deny that the hand of Providence was active in the minute incidents so remarkably shaping the course of these distinguished men.

CHAPTER II.

CHARLES WESLEY'S CONVERSION.

CHARLES WESLEY, as well as his brother, had led from childhood a life of irreproachable morality. In all the outward ordinances of Christianity, he had walked blameless. He had preached a close, searching, and high-toned doctrine of holiness. Yet he had never been, in the evangelical sense of the term, *converted*. He had not become a "new creature." The ground of the sinner's justification before God, the atonement, and the means of that justification—faith—he understood not. He was conscious of his defective experience in religion, and was ready to receive instruction, from whatever source it might come. But he knew not where nor how to obtain relief. He finally made up his decision, to relinquish all hope of peace of mind, or rest for his soul, on earth. He hoped, however, should he die, he should be saved, through the good works he had constantly endeavored to do. Utterly unsuccessful in all his efforts to secure real tranquillity of heart, and despairing of happiness on earth,

he said, in one of his hymns, written at this time,

"Fain would I leave this earth below,
Of pain and sin the dark abode,
Where shadowy joy, or solid woe,
Allures, or tears me from my God;
Doubtful and insecure of bliss,
Since death alone confirms me his.

Absent from God, my exiled soul
Deep in the fleshly dungeon groans;
Around me, clouds of darkness roll,
And laboring silence speaks my moans;
Come quickly, Lord, thy face display,
And change my midnight into day."

Though in this unhappy state of mind, he still zealously labored for the good of others. At all times, in private and in public, sitting by the fireside or traveling in stage-coaches, he endeavored to convince all who would hear him, that religion is an inward and divine principle, of high import to every child of man.

Entertaining yet, as he always had done, a high opinion of the wisdom and experience of Mr. Law, whose writings had exerted so great an influence over him and his brother, he visited Putney—the residence of Mr. Law—to ask for instruction and advice. Mr. Law could give him no other instruction, than that already given in his writings—instruction having no reference to the atonement of Christ—instruc-

tion making no mention of faith—instruction urging its recipients to the hopeless task of attaining holiness of life, while the heart had never been changed from a state of nature to a state of grace. Of such instruction Wesley had already had enough—too much. Of advice, Mr. Law could or would give only the following very brief, and not very intelligible specimen: "Renounce yourself, and be not impatient."

From the presence of so miserable a comforter, Wesley retired in sadness. God, however, did not, in the hour of his distress, forsake him. His providence sent along a wiser instructor, a more judicious adviser, a better comforter. Count Zinzendorf—whom we have mentioned in the account of John Wesley—having become a minister of the Moravian Church, arrived about this time in England, in order to effect a union between the missionaries of the Moravian and of the English Church, in Georgia. As Wesley had just returned from America, Zinzendorf sought his acquaintance, and held several interviews with him on American affairs. Becoming acquainted with each other, the Count—combining in himself the incongruous characteristics of a German noble-

man and a Moravian bishop—and Wesley—combining in himself the equally incongruous characteristics of a high Churchman and an Oxford Methodist—were mutually pleased. They held frequent conversations on religious experience. The Bishop of London had acknowledged that the Moravians had the "true succession." Of course Wesley felt at liberty to become more intimate and communicative with Zinzendorf, than with a "Dissenter," however learned and pious such a Dissenter might be. He opened all his soul to the Moravian, and asked advice and counsel on all spiritual matters. The lady of Zinzendorf, and some other Moravians accompanying the Count on this visit, they held public religious services at their own lodgings. At these services, Wesley was on one occasion present, and "thought himself in a choir of angels."

Immediately on returning home to Germany, Zinzendorf ordained Peter Bohler, and sent him to England, on his way to America. Bohler was a man of education, of zeal, and of deep religious experience. His connection with John Wesley, his influence over him, and his service to him, have been already related. Bohler was of no less service to Charles Wes-

ley. Wishing to learn the English language, he became the pupil of Charles in grammar, and Charles became his pupil in religion. Wesley fell sick. Bohler watched over him, instructed him, and prayed for him.

Before Bohler left England for America, Wesley had advanced so far in the knowledge of religious experience, that one might say of him, as Jesus said of another inquirer, he was "not far from the kingdom of God." He did not, however, yet believe in instantaneous conversion. At a little meeting, of himself, his brother John, Mr. Broughton, of Oxford, and Mrs. Delamotte, there arose a discussion on conversion, whether it be gradual or instantaneous. John Wesley very positively maintained that conversion was instantaneous, and mentioned some late instances of gross sinners believing in a moment. Charles was "much offended and greatly shocked at the worse than unedifying discourse" of his brother, and Mrs. Delamotte left the room, in high dudgeon, being greatly scandalized at such doctrine.

Charles Wesley soon came to a better state of mind, and perceived the folly of disputing about a fact, which can be ultimately decided only by consciousness, and of which his con-

"Life of Haliburton." Mr. Hutton.

sciousness could bear no testimony, inasmuch as the fact then lay without the range of his own experience. A book, which he read about this time—the "Life of Haliburton"—contributed greatly to soothe his mind, and prepare him for calm inquiry; and he proceeded again to consider Peter Bohler's doctrine of faith, and to examine whether he was in the faith, with a fixed resolution, if he was destitute of faith, never to cease seeking it, till he attained it.

For many years past, whenever John and Charles Wesley visited London, they had made their home at the house of Mr. Hutton, a clergyman. They had ever been treated by the family with great kindness and hospitality. Mr. Hutton and his lady, however, were extremely hostile to the views which the Wesleys began to entertain, of conversion, justification, and the new birth. They had two sons, of mature age, settled in business for themselves, who, having been in company with the Wesleys, and with Peter Bohler, had adopted the same evangelical views. One of the sons being a printer, had intended to print and publish the "Life of Haliburton." So far did the father and mother carry their opposition to the new views, that they, by parental authority, abso-

lutely forbade their son—though a man probably thirty years old—to publish "that enthusiastic book." The "head and front of offense" of the book consisted in the fact that Haliburton was a Dissenter, and talked of religious "experiences."

They appealed to Samuel Wesley to "put a stop, if he could, to the extravagance of his brothers, or the mischief which they would do, wherever they went, among ignorant, but well-meaning Christians, would be very great." This alarming "extravagance," it will be remembered, consisted only in teaching the *doctrine of regeneration*, as now received universally among all evangelical Christians, and in relating Christian experience, such as we now hear in nearly all religious meetings.

Under such a state of feeling among the Huttons, Charles Wesley, being in London at this time, did not wish to visit them. He was in feeble health, totally unable to walk, having to be carried from place to place in a chair, and in a state of mind wholly uncongenial to contentious disputation. While waiting in suspense, not knowing as he could do any thing better than to go to his old home, "God sent to him Mr. Bray, a poor, ignorant mechanic, who

knows nothing but Christ; yet by knowing him, knows and discerns all things." Mr. Bray prayed with him. Wesley was overpowered, and melted into tears. He began to think it was the will of Providence he should go to Mr. Bray's rather than to Mr. Hutton's. He judged rightly. At Mr. Hutton's, his feelings might have been injured by censure, and his mind harrassed by profitless controversy. At the humble home of the poor mechanic, he might find sympathy, congenial hearts, and affinity of sentiment. Accordingly, he was taken up in his chair, and carried to Mr. Bray's. The "ignorant mechanic" proved to be well instructed in faith, in love, in holiness, in all the mysteries of religious experience, and able to teach the accomplished and classical scholar the way of life, more perfectly than he had ever known it. He read to Wesley "many comfortable Scriptures," which greatly strengthened him. He joined with him in prayer to the Father of mercies. He talked to him of faith, and of love, and of hope, and heaven. He spoke of Jesus, and of the atonement, and of the forgiveness of sins, and of the witness of the Spirit. The simple yet evangelical words of the pious man, fell on the ear of Wesley,

more welcome than the harmonious numbers of poetry, or the tuneful melody of song. Wesley's heart was glad. He had found, where he had not expected it, sympathy, encouragement, and divine instruction.

Nor was the good mechanic the only angel of mercy which Providence sent Wesley during these days, while he was sick in body, and sick at heart. Through the preaching of Whitefield, the private labors of Peter Bohler, and the preaching of John Wesley, there was aroused in many minds a spirit of anxious inquiry, on religious experience. Many people inquiring the way of salvation, and some who had found it, called at the house of the hospitable mechanic, to see him, and his interesting guest. Among them was the learned Mr. Ainsworth, author of the "Latin Dictionary," which every school-boy, who has ever studied Latin, in England or America, has used. He was then an old man, with whitened locks and venerable mien, but with a heart young and sincere. He attended the Methodist meetings for prayer and praise, and manifested the spirit of those, of whom Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." As Wesley, though feeble in health, was yet able to read, he took up

"Luther on the Epistle to the Galatians," which he had never seen before, but which a friend had accidentally brought him. He began to read the book, and found it full of faith. He perceived that the fundamental principle on which the Reformed Church was founded, was the very doctrine—justification by faith alone—for which he and his brother were suffering so much obloquy. He was astonished that he had ever thought it a new doctrine. He wondered how, so long as the articles and homilies of the Church of England, which he now perceived clearly teach this doctrine, stand unrepealed, the ministers of that Church could preach any other doctrine—how could the Church be so soon removed from the doctrine of Christ—the doctrine of the Reformation—to another Gospel.

It may seem strange, that Wesley had never before discovered the true intent and meaning of the eleventh article of religion, in the creed of his own Church. But it often happens, that truths the most incontestable, and the most plainly taught in books we every day read, make little impression on our minds. Spiritual ideas can be communicated to those minds only, that have affinity therefor.

From that time, Wesley endeavored to ground as many of his friends as visited him, in the fundamental truth of "salvation by faith alone—not an idle, dead faith; but a faith which works by love, and which is necessarily productive of all good works, and all holiness." Still he was not conscious of the exercise of that faith which he preached to others. He had not the evidence of sins forgiven. He had not peace of mind. He was humble, penitent, teachable, and persevering. He read the Bible, studied the promises of God, and prayed almost without ceasing. He continued asking, that he might receive; seeking, that he might find; knocking, that it might be opened; and laboring to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, with the faith that brings salvation.

On a bright May morning—the morning of the holy Sabbath—he awoke, in hope and expectation of the coming of Christ. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends called on him, and sung a hymn. After they left the room, he breathed in the ear of the invisible, but ever-present One, a short, but fervent and humble prayer. He then composed himself in peace, and was falling into a gentle slumber, when he heard a soft and solemn voice, saying,

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities." Scarcely had the echo of the voice died away in the room, when light broke forth on his soul—peace glided into his mind—joy leaped into his heart. He gave utterance to his feelings in the following hymn, composed on the occasion:

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast-bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke: the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free—
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, with all in him, is mine;
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed with righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own."

There was something peculiar in the circumstances, under which he heard the soft and soothing voice in his room, as well as in the effect the words had on his heart. The voice was that of a poor, illiterate, yet pious woman, who quietly came into the room, and imperceptibly glided out again. She was either an inmate of the family, or a frequent visitor She perceived the condition of Mr. Wesley. She pitied him. She heard him praying for

pardon, peace, and holiness. She felt a deep and solemn conviction, that she ought to address him in the words we have related. But she was a poor, weak, illiterate woman; and he was a scholar and a clergyman. How, then, dare she presume to approach him, and speak to him? Yet she thought that God commanded her to say those very words, and she felt constrained, so that she could not forbear to do it. "A word fitly spoken, how good is it!" God was pleased, in his providence, to use these words, repeated by a poor woman, as the medium of communicating peace to the troubled soul of the praying penitent.

With peace of mind, health of body began to return to the invalid. Ever since his return from America, he had been subject to severe attacks of pleurisy. He began to recover slowly. He was not, however, able to preach publicly till the following autumn, when his brother John returned from his visit to Germany, and the two brothers began to co-operate in their public ministry. During the summer he was ever active, as his strength would admit, instructing his friends in the way of salvation, exhorting them, and praying for them. He was abundantly successful in his labors of faith and love.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, and of instantaneous conversion, in most cases where Wesley proposed it among his friends, gave offense. But often, those who at first took offense, at last yielded in mind and in heart. Mrs. Delamotte, who had abruptly left the room some time before, while John Wesley was advocating this doctrine, left it again as suddenly and as angrily when Charles began to advocate, in her presence, the same doctrine. Her son William—student at Cambridge, and inclined to introduce in that University the Methodism of Oxford—objected, stoutly, to the doctrine of faith and free grace; because it would appear "unjust in God, to make sinners equal with them who had labored for years in good works." Both the mother and son, with nearly all the family, were soon converted, and became as warm advocates of the truth as the Wesleys themselves. A lady with whom he met in a stage-coach, and to whom he preached on the way faith in Christ, was so offended, that, on learning he was a Methodist, she actually threatened to *beat him*. Really, it would be laughable to see a *lady*, in a stage-coach, undertake to whip a clergyman, for preaching faith. I doubt whether any English traveler

has met with any thing in America quite equal to that.

As soon as Mr. Wesley became able to engage more laboriously in Christian zeal, he became a constant visitor, while in London, to the Newgate prison, to instruct, comfort, and commend in prayer to the mercy of Him who died on the cross, the poor convicts. At that time, the criminal law of England was horribly sanguinary. The poor creatures who had, through destitution or ignorance, or want of religious or moral instruction, violated the laws, in the commission of slight offenses, were publicly executed, without mercy. Wesley believed and taught that Christ died for sinners—even for felons. He had no misgivings in offering—on the Scriptural terms of repentance and faith—pardon, and peace, and eternal life, to the worst, the most degraded, and the most unhappy of men. He went to the prison. He remained sometimes all night in the cell with the condemned. He accompanied the forsaken and disconsolate victims to the place of execution. He stood by the gallows; and he pronounces one hour he spent there, on one occasion, with an unfortunate malefactor, "the most blessed hour of his life."

Summer of 1738.

Thus he passed the summer of 1738, doing good in every possible way, going from place to place, as his health permitted, and teaching all who would hear the way of life and salvation. Great and glorious was his success. Many happy and triumphant conversions occurred under his private and public instructions. John Wesley, on his return from Germany, in the autumn of that year, might find among the converts of his brother many living witnesses of that faith and that Christian experience, which the pious Moravians, whose company and instruction he had sought, professed.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES WESLEY'S TRAVELS AND PUBLIC MINISTRY.

THE meeting between Charles Wesley and his brother, in the autumn of 1738, was a season of deep interest. John had seen, in Germany, the "place where the Christians lived," and Charles had seen, in England, the careless and the formal become Christians in deed and in truth. They spent the first evening relating experiences and taking sweet counsel together. They were ready to unite their labors in the common cause of doing good—laboring wherever Providence opened the way. Neither of the brothers having the most remote intention of departing, in the slightest degree, from ecclesiastical order, they waited on the Bishop of London, to answer the complaints he had heard against them on the subject of their preaching, and to consult him on some questions relating to rebaptizing persons who had been baptized by Dissenters, but were dissatisfied therewith. The Bishop was quite non-

committal and unsatisfactory. One or two other interviews with bishops were held during the autumn, but nothing definite nor satisfactory resulted. Toward the close of the year, Whitefield returned from Georgia. He was ardently attached to Charles, and solicitous for his welfare. He advised him to accept a settlement, either at Oxford, as tutor, or at Cowley, as parish priest. John Wesley, and several other friends, joined Whitefield in urging Charles to this course. All, however, was ineffectual. Charles declined a settlement. He could give no other reason than a reluctance which he felt against settling in any place without further direction from God. Providence had work for him to do, of which he knew not the nature or importance. He accepted, for a short time, from the vicar, the curacy of Islington, one of the dependencies of London. His preaching proved offensive to the church-wardens, who, therefore, determined, in opposition to the congregation, to get rid of him and his Methodism. They first tried on him the effect of petty annoyance and ill-bred insult. Not succeeding by this means, they placed themselves at the foot of the pulpit stairs, and when he attempted to ascend, after prayers, violently pushed him

back in the face of the congregation. The people protested, but in vain. The time-serving vicar was afraid to interfere, and, stranger still, the Bishop of London winked at the course of the wardens.

During John Wesley's first visit to Bristol, Charles remained in London and vicinity, doing what he could in the great work of saving souls. Being invited, by a clergyman, to go a few miles into the country to preach, he assented. But when the exemplary clergyman heard him preach the new birth, and saw the people flocking, in crowds, to hear him, he was so enraged, that he actually struck the mild and gentle-spirited Wesley, who had come, by his own invitation, to preach for him. A magnanimous farmer standing by, and seeing the insult, invited Wesley to go and preach in his field. Having heard of the results of preaching in the fields, by his brother and Whitefield, at Bristol, and finding church after church closed against him, he determined to follow the example of his worthy coadjutors, and immediately went into the open field, followed by five hundred attentive hearers. The next day he returned to London. There he met Whitefield, who consoled and encouraged him, and

Large Congregation. Sued and Fined.

urged him to preach, as he had done, in Moorfields. Wesley, accordingly, the next Sunday, preached, in the morning, in Moorfields, to about *ten thousand* hearers, and, in the afternoon, on Kennington Common, to "multitudes on multitudes." The Sunday following he visited Oxford, to preach, "in his turn," before the University. Returning the next week, he preached again at Moorfields to ten thousand, in the morning, and, in the evening, on Kennington Common, to twenty thousand. His way from Moorfields to Kennington Common lay across an open field. Passing harmlessly over it to his appointment, he was the next day sued, by the mean and cowardly owner, out of hatred to Methodism, for trespass, and fined, damages and costs, about *one hundred dollars*. He continued preaching in the fields and commons, about London, visiting the prisoners at Newgate, and expounding in the cities, till the latter part of August, when he went to Bristol to relieve his brother John, whose presence was desirable in London. On his way to Bristol, he visited Oxford and Gloucester, the birthplace of Whitefield. The people of Gloucester desired to hear him preach. He sent to the minister of the parish to "borrow his pulpit."

The minister politely sent back word, that he should be very happy to *drink a glass of wine with him*, but he dare not lend him his pulpit for fifty guineas. Mr. Whitefield, however, brother of the eloquent George, did dare to lend him his field, which served equally as well as the pulpit, and in which Wesley preached to two thousand attentive hearers. Preaching along the way, wherever he could get hearers, he arrived at Bristol, and immediately entered on his labors, following in the footsteps of his predecessors—Whitefield and John Wesley—preaching in the neglected parts of the city, in Kingswood, and in the neighboring country; visiting from house to house, and expounding the Scriptures in private circles and in the societies.

While he was preaching at Bristol, a pious, enlightened, and catholic-spirited Dissenting minister, from a neighboring village, had the curiosity to go out into the fields to hear him. He found him standing in the middle of a plain, in an erect posture, on a table, engaged in prayer, and surrounded by thousands of people. He prayed with uncommon fervor, fluency, and variety of proper expression. He then preached about an hour with zeal, perspicuity, ability, and with evident manifestations

of a most vehement desire to convince his hearers of the truth. After supporting his doctrines, as he advanced, by numerous texts of Scripture, he used a great variety of the most moving arguments and expostulations in order to persuade, allure, instigate, and, if possible, to compel all to come to Christ, and to believe in him for pardon and for salvation. At evening the gentleman went to a society meeting; and he has left us an interesting account of the manner in which those meetings were conducted. The room was so thronged, it was difficult to find a place to stand. When Wesley arrived, the people were singing a hymn, but they ceased as he entered the room. He first prayed, then expounded part of a chapter in the Gospel, then sung a hymn, then proceeded in the exposition, then sung another hymn, and then closed by prayer and benediction. "Never," says the good man, "did I hear such praying. At the close of every single petition a serious *amen*, like a rushing sound of waters, ran through the whole society. Never did I hear such singing—so harmonious, so delightful. They sung lustily, and with good courage, with melody in their hearts. If there be such a thing as heavenly music, on earth, I heard it

there."[1] Singing has ever constituted an important and most interesting part of divine worship in Methodist meetings. The Wesleys were both poets, and took great interest in singing. They had already published three volumes of hymns and sacred poems, for the use of their people. We shall see more of their interest in sacred poetry, as we trace their history.

About the first of November, 1739, Charles Wesley returned from Bristol to Oxford on business of the University, with which he and John still held a nominal connection. Scarcely had he arrived, when he received intelligence of the sudden death of his brother Samuel, at Tiverton. To the scene of mourning, to comfort the bereaved family, Charles and John immediately hastened. Samuel Wesley was the eldest of the family. He was born in 1691. At the age of twenty-four he graduated, at Oxford, with distinguished honor. For twenty years after he graduated, he was teacher in the Westminster school. He was a learned and good man. As a classical scholar, he was eminent; as a poet, respectable; as a teacher, popular; as a man, highly esteemed. He was distinguished for kindness of heart and benevo-

lence to his friends. He aided largely in the education of his brothers, and in the support of his sisters. He was deeply imbued with high Church principles, and severe on all Dissenters and irregulars, though he had too much kindness of heart to become intolerant. Judging of the measures of his brothers, during the years 1738 and 1739, from the representations of others, he feared they were becoming irregular in their ecclesiastical proceedings, and might turn out, in the end, Dissenters; and he became somewhat censorious toward them. A correspondence which ensued between him and John, and in which the new doctrine and new measures, as he considered them, were fully discussed, seemed greatly to have softened his asperities toward the brothers, but did not fully convince him of the ecclesiastical regularity of their course. He died before a personal interview with them could be procured. He retired one evening in usual health. At three in the morning he fell sick, and at seven he died. To his bereaved family John and Charles offered the sympathy and aid which their benevolent hearts ever induced them to bestow on the distressed and the suffering.

Returning from his brother Samuel's funeral,

Charles Wesley was busily employed, in connection with his brother John, in managing the difficulties with the Moravians of Fetter Lane, in opening the preaching-place at the Foundery, and in organizing the United Societies. The greater part of 1740 he spent in traveling, accompanied by Thomas Maxfield, over the neighborhood of London and Bristol, preaching and visiting the converts and the societies. At Kingswood an event occurred illustrating his powerful influence among the colliers. News was brought to him at Bristol, that the colliers of Kingswood had risen in riot on account of the high price of corn. He proceeded forthwith, though just risen from a fit of sickness, to the place of tumult. He met about a thousand near Lawrence Hill. They stopped, on his approach. He ascended the knoll, and began to address them. The most of them beginning to exhibit symptoms of returning order, the leaders of the insurrection rushed in among them and attempted to rally them. Wesley walked directly up to the ruffians, placed his hands on their shoulders, and said, "Follow me." The effect was wonderful. The lion became the lamb. "Follow you, Mr. Wesley?" said they; "that we will, the world over." He

then led the way back to the Kingswood school-room, singing a hymn, in which all the company joined. They met several parties of the insurgents, but nearly all turned about, fell into the procession, and marched back. Arriving at the school-room, they opened a prayer meeting. While they were praying, a messenger arriving informed them that those of the insurgents who had refused to return with Wesley had quietly walked on to Bristol, stated their grievances before the mayor, and had then returned, without noise or disturbance, to their homes in Kingswood. So great was the change which divine truth and grace had wrought in these men, once so fierce, so ungovernable, and so desperately wicked.

From several hints given by John Wesley, in his Journal, and also from some letters of Lady Huntington to John Wesley, it would appear that in the latter part of 1740, or early part of 1741, Charles Wesley, for a short time, was inclined to join the Moravians. Molther, whose strange doctrines had caused the troubles between the Methodists and Moravians, had been recalled to Germany, and Peter Bohler, whom the Wesleys greatly respected, had returned to England. Strenuous efforts were

made, by leading Moravians, to proselyte Charles Wesley. Ingham, the Delamotte family, and many other of Wesley's dearest friends, were with them. Their quiet, contemplative, mystic life could not fail to have charms for a mind so poetic as his. He had grown tired of the incessant turmoil of a life aggressive on every kind of error and vice. He longed for retirement and contemplation. Under these circumstances he wavered, and, for a few days, actually relinquished his ministerial labors. But it was only for a few days. He returned again to his work, and carried it on with renewed spirit and energy.

In the contest with the Calvinists he was as active as his brother John. He most cordially hated Calvinism, though he as cordially loved several of its most prominent advocates. Whitefield and Howell Harris were ever held, by him, in the highest esteem. He sometimes preached against Calvinistic tenets outright, and, at other times, he preached his own views without naming the controversy. Preaching once, in Wales, among stanch predestinarians, he explained his own doctrines, without touching the dispute, with so much success, that he remarks, "Who can resist the power of love?

A loving messenger of a loving God might drive reprobation out of Wales without once naming it."

During 1741 he made frequent visits to Wales, where he preached with great success. His success, however, excited opposition. At Cardiff the stage-players were furiously aroused because he drew the people away from the theater to the church. The Pharisaical part of the town, offended at his plain preaching and searching doctrines, joined the stage party. The conspirators bound themselves, by a vow, to prevent his preaching. Failing in this, they tried to raise disturbance by rushing out of the church in a body. Soon after they had left, a physician rose up and marched out. Wesley called after him, pronouncing him a Pharisee. The next night the physician, under the influence of brandy and bad advisers, called at the lodgings of Wesley, and demanded satisfaction. Wesley told him he would ask his pardon for calling him a Pharisee on the assurance that he had left the church to visit his patients. The doctor said he had left because he disliked the discourse. "Then," said Wesley, "I shall not ask your pardon for telling you the truth." "But you must for calling me a Pharisee."

"You are a Pharisee, and can not endure sound doctrine. My commission is to show you your sins. I shall make no apology for doing that to you or any man living, even to the king." On this the drunken doctor lifted up his cane to strike Wesley, but a lady intercepted the blow, and a gentleman tripped up his heels, and laid him sprawling on the floor. The family then pitched him out into the street. Soon after, a bailiff broke open the door, and began to lecture Wesley on the affront offered the doctor by calling him a Pharisee, and demanded public satisfaction. "Mr. Bailiff," said Wesley, "I honor you for the sake of your office; but were you, or his Majesty, King George himself, among my hearers, I should tell you both the truth. In the church, while preaching, I acknowledge no superior but God, and I shall ask no man's pardon for telling him he is a sinner. It is your duty, Mr. Bailiff, not to prevent, but to protect me." On this the bailiff became exceedingly civil. He had the best feelings in the world toward Mr. Wesley. He had only come there to prevent his being insulted. No body should touch a hair of his head.

On one of his visits to Wales, he formed a

very pleasant acquaintance with Mr. Jones, a magistrate; a man of wealth, education, refinement, and influence. He had been educated at Oxford, and was a cotemporary in College with Wesley, though they had not there any acquaintance with each other. He now lived in opulence, in one of the old baronial castles, surrounded by a most amiable family. He sent for Wesley to visit him, and being greatly pleased with him, invited him to come again to meet the minister of the parish at the castle. Mr. Jones hoped a personal interview between his minister and Wesley might result in removing prejudice. They accordingly met. The minister's address was not of the most gentle and polite kind. With difficulty Mr. Jones could prevent him from breaking out abruptly on Wesley, who said little, waiting till an opportunity might offer for him to "speak as one having authority." Through the influence of Mr. Jones, permission had been obtained for Wesley to preach in the church. When, however, the people were assembling, the multitude was so great, that it was proposed for Wesley to preach in the church-yard. At this the conscientious clergyman of the parish came near falling into hysterics. To relieve him they

proposed to remove one of the windows, so that Wesley, standing in the space, might address, at the same time, the people in the church and the church-yard. But this would not do. The minister would bolt if Wesley should offer to preach in a place so *uncanonical* as the window of a church. So Wesley went into the pulpit and preached to as many as could get into the church. The *devotional* minister stood on his feet during all prayer-time, though the prayers of his own Church were used. After service was over, Wesley heard him complaining to Mr. Jones that the sermon would make the people melancholy, as he saw some of them weeping in the church. This was too much even for Charles Wesley to bear. He says he *felt afraid he should despise the man*, and, therefore, he got out of his presence as soon as possible.

On one of Wesley's visits to Wales, Mr. Jones returned with him to Kingswood and Bristol, where he spent some time, observing the wonderful effects of religion on the converts among the colliers, and in the city. He was greatly delighted at what he saw and heard. He visited the class meetings, the prayer meetings, the love-feasts, and the band meetings.

He joined in the worship of the sincere and honest converts, and in artless words related his own religious experience. He then returned to his own country, full of faith, and joy, and confidence in the Gospel. Wesley never saw him more. On his next visit to Wales, his honorable, generous, and accomplished friend had passed from among the living. Suddenly, and in the very prime of manhood, he had died, beloved and lamented by all who knew him. He died in the triumphs of the faith he had professed. Deeply affected at his sudden removal, and impressed with the excellence of his character, Charles Wesley poured forth in tuneful numbers the feelings of his heart in a beautiful elegy, which he published in a pamphlet, and circulated among his friends.

Scarcely had the grave closed over the remains of Mr. Jones, when Wesley was called to mourn over the departure of his venerable mother, whose death we have described in the sketch of John Wesley. And during the same year he stood by the dying bed, and at the grave of a large number of the members of his society in Kingswood and Bristol. The rooms in which these converts died were often scenes of intense moral sublimity. Shouts of triumph,

and songs of victory were heard from lips pale with disease, and from tongues growing stiff with death. Whoever looked on those scenes, was constrained to say, with him of olden time, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." These converts feared not to look on death. They feared not the grave. Cheerfully they relaxed their hold on life, and resigned themselves to the grave,

> "Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

The funeral of these Christian people was attended by the whole society. Wesley would preach a funeral sermon at the house. Then a procession of the whole society would be formed, and the coffin would be borne on a bier, carried by sympathizing friends, to the church-yard. The burial service would be performed, and the grave filled up. Then the people would join, harmoniously, in singing one of Wesley's own funeral hymns, often composed on the spot, and given out, verse by verse. Some of the finest hymns of Wesley—the finest in the English language—were thus composed, improvisate, at the grave of a friend. Composed under such circumstances, and sung in the open air, by many hundred voices, they must have produced

a wonderful effect. Some of these dirges are found in the "Hymn-Book" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Many more remain unknown among the voluminous poetry of the Wesleys, and many more are probably irrecoverably lost. Serving only for the occasion for which they were composed, some were never committed to writing, and were never remembered afterward. The emotions of Charles Wesley rose and fell in numbers. Poetry was natural to him. He felt in poetry, he thought in poetry, and he often talked in poetry. His poetry seems all unstudied—the spontaneous outpourings of a full soul. He took little pains to smooth and polish; but left his productions in the form in which they first sprang to life. With more care and correction, his poetry might have become of an order even higher than it now maintains. But he had too much on hand to be fastidious in matters of mere literary taste.

During the era of persecution, Charles Wesley bore his full share of labor and of suffering. In the sketch of John Wesley, we have related several incidents, in which Charles was principal hero. In these seasons of sore trial, he exhibited a courage and bravery, which might

have added renown even to the name of Ney. Like his heroic brother, he always endeavored to secure a position, where he could look the enemy in the face. He stood calmly at his post on one occasion, and deliberately bared his bosom, while a military ruffian was rushing toward him with a drawn sword. The cowardly officer, seeing his calm courage, lowered his crest, and walked away. The civil officer of the city then approached, and ordered him to leave the place. He answered that he should go none the sooner for the order. In one of the most dangerous scenes of a terrible onset from a mob, the authorities of the city proposed to protect him, if he would promise never to come there again. He answered that he would make no promise of the kind, but would go whenever he pleased, to any part of the British dominions. In the midst of the panic of the nations, caused by the war with France and Spain, and the threatening approach of the Pretender, when he knew that the clergy of the National Church had every-where excited the people against the Methodists, making the ignorant populace actually believe that the Wesleys were Papists, in the pay of France and Spain, and in the interests of the Pre-

tender, he fearlessly started off on a journey to Newcastle, preaching all along the route, at Birmingham, Dudley, Wednesbury, Nottingham, Sheffield, Epworth, and Leeds, exposing himself in every place to men, savage as the bear, cruel as the tiger, and voracious as the wolf. He arrived at Newcastle just as the news arrived of a victory of the British arms in Germany. All the city was in an uproar. The people testified their thanksgiving for the victory, by getting drunk, and raising an inglorious mob against the Methodists. At Norwich, in the midst of the confusion and disturbance, a huge, black, grizzly man called on him, and offered to become his champion, and fight for him, at a fair compensation. Wesley thanked him for his kind intentions, but hoped he should have no serious occasion for his services. In the persecution that arose in Ireland, on the first visits of the Methodists, Charles Wesley suffered severely. Instead of protection from the civil authorities of the country, he received only insult. He, with several other preachers, was presented by the grand jury of Cork as a person of ill fame, and a vagabond. In all these scenes of persecution, through which he passed, he maintained the same bold

and fearless temper. He, though remarkable for his tenacities of adherence to the Established Church, affirms that the persecutions, unchristian as they were, received their origin in the direct influence of the clergy. Churches were every-where closed against him, and the people were urged to lay on him violent hands. Arriving at Shields one Sabbath morning about Church-time, he proceeded directly to the parish church, to attend, as was his custom, the regular service performed by the settled minister. The people of the city, aware of his coming, rushed to the church after him, and filled it to overflowing. The minister was reading prayers when he entered. The clerk seeing Wesley enter, supposed he had come to preach. He, therefore, rushed up to him, in the midst of the prayers, and bawling out, with all the wind he could command, told him he had no business to come there to preach. That was consecrated ground. The fellow hallooed so loud nobody could hear the prayers. After he had screamed himself out of breath, Wesley whispered in his ear, and told him not to speak so loud, or he might disturb the Church-service, and assured him he had no intention at all of preaching there. After the service was over,

End of Persecution.

he went to the church-yard, followed by thousands, and preached uninterrupted.

The era of persecution passed away, and the Methodists were suffered to take their own course, as we have more fully related in our sketch of John Wesley. Charles Wesley continued traveling over the kingdom, preaching and laboring, in connection with his brother, till 1756. After this time, his labors were chiefly devoted to Bristol and London.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLES WESLEY'S DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

AT Garth, in South Wales, resided, in the early times of Methodism, Marmaduke Gwynne, Esq., a gentleman of rank and of fortune. He was a member of the Established Church, of the straitest sect. He heard of Howell Harris—the friend of Whitefield, and of the Wesleys, and who had begun, though a layman, to preach in the fields, and other "unconsecrated" places, in Wales, as his illustrious friends were doing in England. Mr. Gwynne was sadly distressed, and greatly alarmed, at this unheard-of irregularity. Being a magistrate, he resolved to interpose the authority of the realm, and stop the preaching of the unordained heretic. But, like a sensible man, as he was, he concluded to hear him for himself, before he used his authority. Accordingly, he put the riot act in his pocket, and went to hear Harris preach, intending to arrest him at the close of meeting, before the whole congregation.

But, while listening, a change came over the spirit of his dream. So evangelical was the doctrine, so zealous the manner, and so sweet the spirit of the preacher, Mr. Gwynne thought he resembled the apostles of Jesus. No sooner had Harris sat down, than Gwynne went up to him, in the face of the congregation, took him by the hand, told him he had come there for the purpose of committing him to prison; but instead of that, he now asked his pardon, and, to the utter consternation and blank amazement of the people, he invited him to go to his mansion to supper. This incident threw over Harris, and all the Methodists, a broad and impenetrable shield of protection. Mr. Gwynne was in place of the King in that region. Harris went home with him. The establishment was large and princely. Mr. Gwynne had nine children, and twenty servants. He supported a chaplain for his establishment, and usually had fifteen or twenty distinguished guests. His lady was heir to a princely fortune. She was a generous and kind lady, of superior talents and education. But she was as strict in her Church principles as her husband had been, and less susceptible of change. When she saw her husband bring Harris to the house,

Mrs. Gwynne. Hears Wesley.

and treat him with as much respect as if he had been the Archbishop of Canterbury, she thought he had lost his reason; and in consternation she left the room, and would not return till Harris had left the house. Soon after this, a new affliction befell the good lady. Her daughter Sarah, an accomplished and beautiful girl of eighteen, followed her father, and became deeply interested in the new doctrine. The mother was in despair. She thought infatuation had seized her family, and irretrievable ruin must result. She found no relief but in tears.

After some time, she met a gentleman, who told her he knew John Wesley, at Oxford, and he was not so bad a heretic as was reported. She was also induced to read Wesley's "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." She then ventured to hear Harris herself. In a short time John Wesley himself came along. With him the lady was delighted. She entertained him with all the hospitality King George could have desired, and invited him to preach in her house.

Some two years after this, Charles Wesley arrived in Wales, on his return from a visit to Ireland. He was in very feeble health, be-

ing worn down by labor and exposure. He had, some year or two before, met Mr. Gwynne, at Bristol, and in accordance with a promise then made, proceeded to the hospitable mansion, where he at once felt at home. He remained two weeks, in the midst of comforts, such as had not often fallen to his lot. He received the soothing attentions of the elegant family, and soon forgot his fatigues, recovered his health, and was ready again to face danger, and toil, and suffering.

Amid the elegant refinements of this hospitable family, Wesley passed his time in striking contrast with the toilsome days spent traveling over the rugged mountains of Wales, the rough roads of England, or the fenny bogs of Ireland. But he must be about his Master's business. One beautiful spring morning, he was preparing to take his departure for London. His horse was brought to the door, but not alone. There stood the noble steed of Mr. Gwynne, and the gentle pony of the beautiful Sarah. Wesley started, and father and daughter accompanied him along the mountain track, till they reached the plain, on the road to London. They then spoke the farewell words, shook the farewell hand and Wesley went on his way, while the

noble father and lovely daughter returned home.

In June of the same year, Wesley met the magnanimous gentleman and interesting girl at Bristol. They had visited England to observe the wonderful effects of the great revival of religion through the labors of the Methodists. They spent some days among the pious Christians of Bristol, and the strangely-regenerated people of Kingswood, and then accompanied Wesley to London, where they were entertained at the Foundery parsonage. In London, they had an opportunity of observing more fully the influence of Methodist doctrines in raising up a people lively and spiritual. After forming many agreeable acquaintances in London, and being highly delighted with the evidences of piety they saw, they started on their return home, accompanied by Wesley. They visited, on their way, Oxford, spending some time in going over the college grounds, and examining the cabinets and curiosities. Wesley accompanied them even to their home, and then went on his way to Ireland. By this time, as was most natural, the susceptible heart of Charles Wesley had become interested in the beautiful, the lovely, the devoted, and accomplished Sarah

Gwynne. On his return from Ireland, he spent another week in the hospitable and Christian family, much to the mutual gratification of all parties. Returning to London, he communicated to his brother his intention of proposing marriage to Sarah Gwynne. John, like a good-hearted man, as he was, decidedly approved the course, giving him all the advice, and offering him all the assistance he thought necessary. Charles, therefore, repaired forthwith to Wales, with the intention of offering his hand to the daughter, with the consent, if he could obtain it, of the father and mother. But it was expressly settled between the brothers, that a refusal from the lady, or either of her parents, should close the negotiation forever. He first approached the lady with all possible frankness and sincerity, and offered her his heart and his hand. With equal frankness she accepted, and in her turn pledged him her heart. A sister was then admitted to the conference, and commissioned to disclose the matter to the mother, and to ask her consent. "I would rather," answered the mother, "give my child to Mr. Wesley than to any man in England." The father, also, gave his most hearty and unhesitating consent to the marriage. All

these circumstances were of very material account to Mr. Wesley, and tended to settle entirely his mind on the subject.

As there was in those times no adequate provision for the support of the families of the itinerant preachers, it was judged expedient to secure, by some means, to Wesley, for the support of his family, an annual income of five hundred dollars. Mr. Blackwell, a wealthy friend, proposed to raise, by subscription, among some ten or twelve confidential friends, the sum required in perpetuity. But John Wesley objected to this arrangement. He would not allow Charles to be dependent on a few wealthy men, lest it might interfere with his ministerial fidelity. He proposed to give security for the annual payment to Charles of five hundred dollars out of the profits of their books. Thus was the matter settled. During the life of Charles the annuity was regularly paid, and after his death, the principal, about eight thousand dollars, was paid the widow in one sum.

All things being thus arranged, on a lovely April morning, in 1749, Charles Wesley and Sarah Gwynne were joined in marriage by John Wesley. The day was one of the finest

ever seen beneath a British sky. From morning till night not a cloud passed over the heavens.

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

The domestic life of the married pair proved as pure, as gentle, and as tranquil, as the marriage-day.

The youthful wife accompanied her husband on his long and rapid journeys over the kingdom. She rode behind him on horseback—sometimes traveling fifty miles a day. She met with many amusing and some serious incidents. But her piety and her cheerfulness were proof against all untoward circumstances. After a few years of itinerancy, she prepared her a home in a little cottage at Bristol, passing her days in domestic retirement, while her husband was abroad on his great mission.

Bereavement, sad and painful bereavement, often visited the exemplary and pious parents. Of eight children, five were buried in childhood. The eldest, a remarkably-precocious and interesting child, the only one at that time, died of small-pox. The father, on one of his excursions, left the child healthy and happy, but when he returned there was nothing left of his

boy but a lock of hair and the grave. The poor mother was sick of the same dreadful disease. She recovered with life, but with the loss of all her beauty. Wesley, however, averred that she appeared to him more lovely and interesting than ever before.

Two years after this, another child, a sweet and only little daughter, died. In a few years more another, and then another, and another still passed away, till the poor mother, in agony of repeated bereavement, besought the Lord to spare her the pain of following another child to the grave. Her request was granted. Two sons—Charles and Samuel—and a daughter, survived their parents, and lived to old age.

The sons were distinguished by remarkable talents for music. Charles could play on the harpsichord, before he was three years of age, whatever tune he had heard. Indeed, he learned to play before he could walk. Samuel did not begin quite so early; being three years before he could play correctly. They were educated to music as a business, and became eminent in their profession, though they never attained a fortune. It seems, however, very strange, that the sons of such parents should be irreligious. Charles, though moral and harmless, was a

stranger to the spirit of Christianity, and Samuel was, in his religious character, wayward and intractable. He finally became a Roman Catholic. At this the aged father was most deeply grieved. On being informed of the fact, he gave expression to his feelings in the following lines:

"Farewell, my all of earthly hope,
My nature's stay, my age's prop,
Irrevocably gone!
Submissive to the will divine,
I acquiesce, and make it mine;
I offer up my son."

Sarah, the daughter, was an amiable and good child. She became a woman of much eminence for literary talent, and distinguished for piety. She died in 1828. Neither Charles nor Sarah were ever married. Samuel left several children. His children, so far as I am informed, are the only representatives now remaining on earth of the honored name of Wesley.

CHAPTER V.

POETIC GENIUS OF CHARLES WESLEY.

THE temperament of Charles Wesley was very different from that of John. He was the creature of feeling. From his father and his mother he inherited an attachment, nearly approaching bigotry, to the Church of England, and a most cordial dislike to the Dissenters. To this attachment, as a matter of feeling rather than of judgment or reason, he adhered through life. Abused, persecuted, and insulted, as he was by the clergy of the Established Church, he yet remained the avowed enemy of all separation from her communion. In the latter part of his life he could not be reconciled to some of the proceedings of the Methodist preachers. He had readily acquiesced in field-preaching, lay-preaching, and forming Methodist societies; but he could not consent to allow Methodist preachers to administer the ordinances, nor the societies to assume any appearance of separation from the Church. Nor did he like the course of his brother in ordaining

ministers for America and Scotland. He feared that the Methodists, if they separated from the Church, and set up for themselves, would break up into innumerable fragments, and be lost amidst the Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and other dissenters. His ardent desire was to see the Methodist societies return to the bosom of the Church. The abler portion of the preachers might, he thought, be ordained as regular clergymen; the rest might remain as lay assistants; and the societies might be incorporated with the parishes in their neighborhood.

The signs of the times, during the latter years of his life, kept him in a constant panic. He was naturally mercurial in his temperament, rising and falling with the weather, and his mind was alternately highly excited and deeply depressed, by the relative affairs of Methodism and the Church. His comparative retirement from the itinerancy, during the latter years of his life, was probably both the consequence of these feelings and the cause of augmenting the difficulty. Finding he could not perfectly harmonize with his brother's measures, nor at all identify himself with the preachers and people, who repeatedly demanded pro-

vision for administering the ordinances in their own chapels, he chose to retire from the itinerancy, confining his labors principally to London and Bristol. At last he removed to London, and devoted his time mostly to the societies and chapels in the cities. He, however, still considered himself a Methodist, in full connection with his brother, from whom he could not and would not separate. His retired life deprived him of the intimate and general acquaintance which itinerancy would have promoted with the preachers, and he imagined a thousand difficulties which never occurred. We shall cease to wonder at his fears and feelings, if we consider how strong was his prejudice against the Dissenters, and how destitute he must have been of any idea of Methodism, as we see it developed under the modern Wesleyan and the American Methodist Episcopal connections. He did not think it possible to keep the Methodist societies together in one body. The system of independence had not been tried, and he supposed it could not, under any circumstances, succeed. Had Charles Wesley seen, as we have, or could he have formed any notion of the practical workings of Methodism under a system of

independence, he would, with all his Church partialities, have dismissed his fears, and given up his objections.

In the doctrinal controversies, in which the Methodists were engaged in 1770, Charles Wesley took a deep interest. He was the confidant and adviser of Fletcher in the memorable contest with the Calvinists, fully sustaining, with all his heart and soul, the doctrines of the Wesleyan conference. He seldom, however, wrote on controversy, except in verse. Some of his hymns exhibit clear evidence of being written under the excitement of that Antinomian controversy.

He began his public ministry by preaching to the prisoner. Through his long life he never forgot nor neglected the unfortunate beings confined, no matter for what crime, in the dungeon cell. When, in the days of persecution, he was debarred from entering the prison, he would go into the yard, while the poor condemned and forsaken ones would crowd around the iron-grated windows to hear him preach. He found one convict who resisted all his efforts to do him good. This was the noble Earl—Ferrers—the cousin of Lady Huntington. The unhappy man was tried, convicted, and executed in 1760,

for the murder of his own steward. The murder was deemed cruel and unprovoked. The murderer resisted all the attempts of his friends, and the untiring efforts of Wesley, to obtain a religious concession from him. He was pronounced obdurate, proud, unfeeling, and impenitent. It all might be true. Yet from all the circumstances of the case, as related by eye-witnesses, and recorded by history, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it a case of manifest insanity. A Christian lunatic asylum, rather than a Pagan gallows, was the befitting place of the unfortunate Earl.

Another case, occurring in 1777, excited the deepest interest of Charles Wesley. The celebrated, the popular, the eloquent clergyman, Rev. Dr. Dodd, having become embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs, was induced, in an evil hour, for the purpose of securing temporary relief, to commit forgery. For this he was convicted, and sentenced to death. All efforts to obtain pardon, commutation, or reprieve, were unavailing. In happier days, Dr. Dodd had been hostile to the Wesleys; but when he had fallen to the lowest depths of distress, both the brothers visited him, forgetting all past grievances, and deeply interested themselves in his

behalf. The unfortunate man became deeply penitent, but no human influence could wrest him from the relentless grasp of the British criminal law. He died on the gallows, and his poor wife, shocked at the dreadful scene, soon after died in a mad-house.

We have had occasion, in these sketches, to allude, several times, to the poetry of Charles Wesley. His manner of making poetry was very near improvisation. The larger portion of his hymns were composed either on horseback, and written down as soon as he could lay hold of a pen, or were given out extemporaneously to be sung, whenever the poetic fit happened to come over him in the public congregation. He frequently would preach four times, and make several hymns every day. He wrote an immense mass of poetry. There has been enough of his poetic composition published to make, if collected in one edition, ten duodecimo volumes, and the unpublished manuscript would make as much more. Of course, writing so much, he must have produced some mean verses.

Many of his hymns, suggested by occasional circumstances, and given out extemporaneously, or written down rapidly, are of a high order.

There are few who have not been, in the course of life, deeply affected at the strange beauty which sometimes lingers over the face of the dead. In recording, in his Journal, the death of one of his Christian friends, Wesley says, "The spirit, in its departure, had left marks of its happiness on the clay. No sight on earth is, in my eye, half so lovely. We rejoiced with singing over our departed friend." From this passage I have no doubt the following hymn was composed and sung on the occasion:

"Ah, lovely appearance of death!
No sight upon earth is so fair;
Not all the gay pageants that breathe,
Can with this dead body compare:
With solemn delight I survey
The corpse, when the spirit is fled;
In love with the beautiful clay,
And longing to lie in its stead.
How blest is our brother, bereft
Of all that could burden his mind!
How easy the soul that has left
This wearisome body behind!
The languishing head is at rest,
Its thinking and aching are o'er;
The quiet, immovable breast
Is heaved with affliction no more:
The heart is no longer the seat
Of trouble and torturing pain;
It ceases to flutter and beat—
It never shall flutter again."

Preaching, one day, at Portland, where most of the people are employed in the stone-quar-

ries, he gave out, for the congregation, the hymn made for the occasion:

"Come, O, thou all-victorious Lord,
Thy power to us make known:
Strike with the hammer of thy word,
And break these hearts of stone."

While at Newcastle, observing the large fires connected with the collieries, illuminating, like the prairie fires of the Wabash, the heavens in the darkest night, he composed and gave out, to describe the wonderful success of the Gospel, the following hymn:

"See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesus' love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms in a blaze.
To bring fire on earth he came;
Kindled in some hearts it is:
O, that all might catch the flame—
All partake the glorious bliss!

When he first the work began,
Small and feeble was his day:
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way:
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell."

Returning to England from one of his visits to Ireland, he was exposed to imminent danger of shipwreck. The masts gave way, the sails fell on deck, the captain was washed overboard, and the ship was driving rapidly on the rocks.

By the aid of all hands—sailors and passengers—and by the blessing of Providence, the ship was righted, and arrived, late at night, safe in harbor. On landing, and arriving at the house of a friend, he sat immediately down and wrote the following hymn of thanksgiving:

"All praise to the Lord,
Who rules with a word
The intractable sea,
And limits its rage by his steadfast decree.
Whose providence binds,
Or releases the winds,
And compels them again
At his beck to put on the invisible chain.

Even now he hath heard
Our cry, and appeared
On the face of the deep,
And commanded the tempest its distance to keep.
His piloting hand
Has brought us to land,
And no longer distressed,
We are joyful again in the haven to rest."

He happened once to return home, from one of his itinerant excursions, on the anniversary of the birthday of his wife. In the midst of the congratulations of the occasion, he invited her to sing with him a song of praise, and immediately gave out the following joyous and very beautiful lines:

"Come away to the skies,
My beloved arise,
And rejoice in the day thou wast born:

On this festival day,
Come exulting away,
And with singing to Zion return.

We have laid up our love,
And our treasure above,
Though our bodies continue below:
The redeem'd of our Lord,
We remember his word,
And with singing to paradise go.

With thanks we approve
The design of his love,
Who hath joined us in Jesus' name;
So united in heart,
That we never can part,
Till we meet at the feast of the Lamb.

There, there at his feet,
We shall joyfully meet,
And be parted in body no more!
We shall sing to our lyres,
With the heavenly choirs,
And our Savior in glory adore.

Halleluiah we sing,
To our Father and King,
And the rapturous song we repeat:
To the Lamb that was slain,
Halleluiah again,
Sing all heaven, and fall at his feet!"

The funeral hymns were generally composed either at the bedside of the dying, or at the grave of his friends. Finer hymns than some of these were never written by human hand, nor sung by human voice. A few specimens, though well known to those acquainted with

the "Methodist Hymn-Book," may be here given. They will bear repetition.

"O, what a mighty change
Shall Jesus' sufferers know,
While o'er the happy plains they range,
Incapable of woe!

There all our griefs are spent,
There all our sorrows end;
We can not there the fall lament
Of a departed friend.

No slightest touch of pain,
No sorrow's least alloy
Can violate our rest, or stain
Our purity of joy.

In that eternal day,
No clouds—no tempests rise;
There gushing tears are wiped away
Forever from our eyes."

Seldom do we find any composition sweeter than the following lines:

"And let this feeble body fail,
And let it faint or die;
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,
And soar to worlds on high:

Shall join the disembodied saints,
And find its long-sought rest;
That only bliss for which it pants,
In the Redeemer's breast.

O what hath Jesus bought for me!
Before my ravished eyes
Rivers of life divine I see,
And trees of paradise.

I see a world of spirits bright,
Who taste the pleasures there;

They all are robed in spotless white,
And conquering palms they bear.

O, what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host to appear,
And worship at thy feet!

Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away;
But let me find them all again,
In that eternal day."

The well-known hymn,

"How happy every child of grace,"

was composed on a funeral occasion. So, also, was that commencing,

"Come, let us join our friends above,"

which the reader may find in the last chapter of the sketch of John Wesley. The hymn on the death of Whitefield, given in a former chapter, is beautiful. John Wesley esteemed the funeral hymns superior to all others Charles ever wrote. They differ in style, greatly, from the hymns composed by other religious poets on such occasions, and might seem, to the casual glance, too rapturous. But he who has ever stood—as I a few hours ago did stand—by the bedside of a Christian, dying in holy triumph, amidst peans of praise and shouts of victory, will not deem the strains of Wesley too rapturous. The dark mountains, which over-

hang the Lethean stream, that winds along the valley of the shadow of death, do sometimes resound with triumphant shouts, such as never rose from the victorious battle-fields of earth, and echo with music, such as never reverberated along the walls of some old cathedral. By the bedside of the dying Christian, we may sing, with Wesley,

"Happy soul, thy days are ending—
All thy sorrowing days below;
Go, the angel guards attending,
To the sight of Jesus go.
Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo, your Savior stands above;
Shows the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love.

Struggle through thy latest passion,
To thy great Redeemer's breast;
To his uttermost salvation,
To his everlasting rest.
For the joy he sets before thee,
Bear a momentary pain;
Die to live a life of glory;
Suffer, with thy Lord to reign."

And when the conflict is over, and the spirit has passed to its home in heaven, we may again sing,

"He's gone—the happy soul is gone,
Triumphant to his home above;
The prison walls are broken down,
The angels speed his swift remove,
And, shouting, on their wings he flies,
And gains his rest in paradise."

And when we stand over the grave of the loved ones of the heart, we may again sing,

"Why should we lament the lot
Of a saint in Christ deceased?
Let the world, who know us not,
Call us hopeless and unblest.
When from flesh the spirit, freed,
Hastens homeward to return,
Mortals cry, A man is dead!
Angels sing, A child is born!

Hark! a voice comes from the sky,
Happy are the faithful dead,
In the Lord who sweetly die!
They from all their toils are freed,
Them the Spirit hath declared
Blest—unutterably blest;
Jesus is their great reward!
Jesus is their endless rest!"

While John Wesley lay on his dying bed, he repeated, with ecstasy, and sung, with his expiring breath, some of the joyous stanzas of Charles; and many a Christian, of later days, has found in these hymns, expression for his sentiments, in the hour of death.

Having arrived nearly to the age of eighty years, Charles Wesley, on the 29th of March, 1788, fell quietly asleep in death. He seemed to have no disease, and to suffer no pain. He had been, for some months, feeble. He seemed wholly detached from earth, and holding communion with heaven. Convinced, from his

increasing debility, that he must soon die, he took an affectionate leave of his wife, and children, and friends, and lay down, waiting his appointed time. He lingered a few days, and then died, so peaceful, so gently, that the friends around his bed knew not the moment of his departure.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Chapter I.

The Early Career of Whitefield.

Early Boyhood.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD was born in Gloucester, in 1714. His father was an innkeeper. His mother, having suffered severe sickness, protracted for several months after his birth, was deeply impressed through all the course of his infancy and childhood, with a presentiment, accompanied by an ardent desire, that her son, for whom she had suffered so much, would become a great and good man. He did not, however, during his earlier years, manifest much promise of fulfilling her hopes. His father dying when he was two years old, he was left to be brought up in a tavern, without much parental discipline. Being naturally impulsive, and impressible by external influences, he became wild and wayward. He indulged in mischief, if not in crime. In the midst, however, of his froward conduct, and reckless

career, he was often affected by serious thought. Having been born in an inn, and the impressions of his mother concerning his future destiny being known to him, he fancied there might be some analogy between the early history of himself, and of Him who was born in a manger, and whose mother "pondered in her heart" the mysterious indications of Providence. He used, when a mere child, often to act the preacher—reading prayers, and declaiming to his playmates, or to the listening trees of the neighboring forest.

At the age of twelve he was placed in a school in his native village. The peculiar talent, which rendered him, in mature life, distinguished, and which seems to have been in him an original gift of nature, began soon to develop itself. "*Having a good elocution and memory*," he was always appointed orator before the corporation at the examinations. Having read some plays, he contracted great fondness for them, and often spent whole days in preparing to act them. The master of the school, seeing how "his vein ran," unwisely encouraged him in his career, actually composing a play for him and his school-fellows, and dressing him up in female garments to act

it. Whitefield might, had not Providence interposed, have become a stage-player, instead of an evangelical minister of Jesus Christ.

While at school, he contracted, by association with trifling fellows, many loose and vicious habits. He "affected to look rakish," and was in a fair way of becoming as Atheistical and abandoned as the worst of them. Though he had been, for some time after he entered school, studious, and had made considerable proficiency in the classics, yet his dissipating habits and idle associates impaired his taste for learning; and, at the age of fifteen, longing to get rid of what little restraint the discipline of the school-room threw around him, he persuaded his mother, under the plea that her circumstances would not allow her to send him to the University, and that he had already sufficient education for a tradesman, to let him leave school. She, good-naturedly, consented. He returned home, and began, occasionally, to assist his mother about the house, till, at length, he put on his blue apron, and went to work, washing mops, cleaning rooms, and becoming servant of all work.

With industry, though in unfavorable employment, his habits of serious thought re-

turned. When he looked out of the inn window, and saw the boys going by to school, he was often cut to the heart. He began to read the Bible, while sitting up at night. Though he had sometimes the care of the whole house on his hands, yet he actually wrote two or three sermons. He began to feel longings for learning; but his mother's circumstances were so embarrassed, he saw no way to meet the expense of living at school. The cheerfulness with which he submitted to labor in such an employment to aid his poor mother, discloses a most amiable element in his character.

After about a year and a half, there occurred in the circumstances of the family a change, which materially influenced the destiny of Whitefield. His brother, who had been bred to the business of inn-keeping, married, and all the homestead property was made over to him. His mother was obliged to leave the inn, and retire on a very narrow income. As George was very handy in the inn, it was agreed that he should remain, as assistant. Had all things gone on in the house pleasantly, he might have continued through life drawing beer for drunkards. But, *unfortunately*, as it then seemed, yet *fortunately*, as it afterward proved, he and

his brother's wife "could by no means agree." He, therefore, left the house, and, by consent of his mother, went and spent some time with an elder brother, settled in Bristol.

While at Bristol, he heard a sermon which deeply affected him, and made him resolve to prepare himself for the sacrament, and to return no more to the inn. Happening to procure a copy of Thomas a Kempis, he read it with deep interest, and much serious feeling. Returning to Gloucester, he lived at his mother's house, having "a bed on the ground," waiting for Providence to point out a place for him. But he soon learned that, without trying by industry to help ourselves, to wait, idly, for the openings of Providence, is not the better way. Idleness leads to mischief, and mischief to sin. His old habits of dissipation returned. He spent his time in reading plays, and sauntering from place to place. He became vain of his person, but negligent of his heart and his mind. The society of his old schoolmates led him into scenes of depravity. He would have been less exposed to temptation had he been employed even in the inn.

Unpropitious as were the circumstances in which he was placed, he was still under the

influence of the presentiment cherished by his mother from his birth, and by himself, from his childhood, that he should yet become distinguished as the instrument of Providence. One morning, he said to his sister, "I believe, my sister, that God intends me for something, of which we know not. I think Providence will provide for me, in some way which we can not now apprehend." In this state of mind, he received a visit from an old school-fellow, who had entered Pembroke College, Oxford, as *servitor*. The servitors in Oxford were students, who were admitted as charity scholars. They were, however, only partly supported by the college funds. To meet the portion of their expenses not provided for by the allowance from the endowment, they were obliged, either by usage, or by express statute of the University, to serve as waiters at the table. For this table-service, they received a fee from each person whom they served. Whitefield's friend was explaining to him and his mother how he had managed, during the last quarter, to pay all his expenses, and save one penny. A light immediately broke on the mother's mind. "That will do," she exclaimed, "for my son." Then turning to him, she said,

"George, will you go to Oxford?" "With all my heart," said George. Humble as was the place of servitor, the aid of influential friends was necessary to obtain it. Happily, the mother was acquainted with the gentlemen who had obtained the place for her young visitor, and she immediately waited on them, and asked for her son their aid, which they cheerfully promised. He, therefore, returned immediately to the school, which he had a few years before left, in his native village, and applied himself, diligently, to the study of the classics. He grew more serious, regularly attended public worship, received the sacrament, and spent his evenings, after he had done waiting on his mother, in acts of devotion, and in reading religious books. About this time he dreamed that he was to see God on Mount Sinai, but was afraid to meet him. This dream made a great impression on him. It was not the only instance in which he was affected, and his course influenced, and his destiny determined, by a dream. He had not been beguiled by that infidel philosophy, which sneers at the belief that God may, when deep sleep hath fallen on man, speak to him in dreams and visions of the night.

He remained at school about a year, when, being eighteen years old, he entered the University. A benevolent friend paid for him the entrance fee, and through the influence of those who had promised their aid, he was admitted servitor.

He carried with him to the University his serious impressions. They were much strengthened by reading the book which had so much influence over the mind of Wesley—"Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life." But he found the atmosphere with which he was surrounded at Oxford, especially among the Fellows and students of Pembroke, contaminated by the poisonous miasm of infidelity. His associates and room-mates urged him to join with them in riot, dissipation, and profanity. But he absolutely refused. To keep out of their way, he shut himself up in his bedroom, without fire, till he had nearly perished with cold. When his classmates saw they could not induce him to become "one of them," they gave him up as an incorrigible, odd fellow.

The society of Methodists—Wesley and his associates—had been in existence in Oxford some three or four years, before Whitefield entered the University. He heard a great deal

of talk about them, but had no acquaintance with them. He heard them ridiculed, but he boldly and nobly defended them, whenever they were aspersed in his presence. He saw them pass through a ridiculing crowd to the sacrament, and felt strongly inclined to fall in, and go with them. He yearned in his very heart to become acquainted with them; but, being a poor servitor, he felt diffident and reluctant to make his wishes known to them. Nearly a year passed, when Providence, in an unexpected manner, brought them together. Whitefield learned of the unhappy condition of a poor woman, who had, in poverty and despair, attempted to destroy her own life. Wishing to make the condition of the suffering woman known to the Methodists—the only almoners of the poor, and carers for the neglected in Oxford—he sent an apple-woman to Charles Wesley, charging her to tell him of the poor woman, but to conceal the name of the person who sent her to him. She, however, told Mr. Wesley that Whitefield had sent her. Wesley having observed Whitefield at the parish Church sacrament, and having often met him walking by himself, and having, last of all, received from him such a message of mercy,

began to suspect that he might be a congenial soul, and sent by the woman an invitation to him to call the next morning and take breakfast with him.

Most gladly did Whitefield accept the invitation. Such an opportunity of forming a personal acquaintance with some member of the little band of Methodists, he had desired and hoped in vain. But now the way was clear. He pronounced the visit one of the most profitable he ever made. Wesley soon discovered his turn of mind, and after conversing with him on subjects of deep religious interest, placed in his hands some books adapted to his wants. Among these books was a treatise on the "Life of God in the Soul of Man," which produced a wonderful change in the views of the youthful Whitefield, now wholly devoted to sincere inquiry for truth. Though he had fasted, watched, prayed, and received the sacrament so long, yet, till God sent him that treatise, by the hands of Charles Wesley, he had no idea of the nature of true religion. At first he greatly wondered what the author could mean by saying, "that some falsely placed religion in going to Church, doing hurt to no one, being constant in the duties of the closet, and

now and then reaching out their hands to give alms to their poor neighbors." "If this," said Whitefield, "be not religion, what is?" A few lines further, he read, "that true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us." On reading this passage, a ray of light instantaneously darted into his soul, and from that moment, but not till then, did he know that he must become a new creature. From that time he began to visit Mr. Wesley regularly, and to receive from him religious instruction. By degrees he was introduced to the other members of the Methodist association. He soon adopted their methodical mode of living, and was fully initiated into the devout company.

He was soon made to feel the unpleasant consequences of his new position. By going to the sacrament on a week-day, his connection with the Methodists became known. He at once "became a mark for all the *polite* students to shoot at." At first he quailed, under their ridicule. To encourage and support him, Charles Wesley walked with him all the way from the college to the church. But this only embarrassed him the more, as it marked him more surely as one of the "Godly Club," as

Wesley and his associates were in ridicule called. Whitefield would rather not have been seen just at that time in such company. The next day he was going to the room of Wesley, and arrived at the door just as one of the irreligious students was passing; but he so dreaded ridicule, that he was ashamed to be seen knocking at the door. These feelings of the fear of man, however, soon wore off, and he became courageous and open in his avowal of Methodism. He even courted a share of the contempt which so unsparingly fell on the Wesleyan band. And the enemies of Methodism were not slow in pouring out on his head their vials of wrath. Many of the gentlemen who had employed him as servitor now discarded him, and withdrew his fees. The President of the College threatened to expel him for *visiting the poor*. The threat, however, was not executed, though he continued to visit the poor, not only at their houses, but in the jail, where, according to the barbarous code of the age, people were confined, simply because they were too poor to pay their debts. To support him under the withdrawal of his servitor fees, a benevolent gentleman, of London, was induced, through the Wesleyan interest, to make him an annuity

of twenty pounds, with the promise of more if he needed it.

About this time the Wesleys left Oxford on their Georgia mission, and Whitefield became leader of the band of Oxford Methodists. Having learned, from reading the "Life of God in the Soul of Man," the necessity of regeneration, he seems to have been led, by his perceptive and intuitive faculties, to see the way of salvation long before the more logical mind of Wesley discovered it. On recovering from severe sickness, he was enabled to lay hold on Christ by a living faith, and to receive the spirit of adoption. The weight of sin was removed, an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and the full assurance of faith, broke in on his soul, and he was filled with joy—joy unspeakable, and full of glory. His joy, he says, was like a spring-tide, and overflowed the banks. Go where he would, he could not avoid singing psalms aloud.

Soon after his conversion he went home to recruit his health. His exemplary conduct about the village, and devout appearance in church, excited the attention of Dr. Benson, the good Bishop of Gloucester. One day, as he was leaving the church, he was called back,

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and told that the Bishop wished to speak with him. He was alarmed, supposing he had incurred, by some means unknown to him, the Bishop's displeasure. On being admitted to the Bishop's presence, he was received in the most affable and the kindest manner. The Bishop inquired his age; and on being told he was only twenty-one, said, that though he had adopted a rule to ordain no one younger than twenty-three, yet he would make an exception in his case, and ordain him at any time when he might offer himself. After fasting, prayer, and preparation, Whitefield presented himself for ordination. When the Bishop's hands were placed on his head his heart was melted down, and he offered up his whole spirit, soul, and body to the service of God's sanctuary. He threw himself, as he says, blindfold, and without reserve, into the hands of Providence, determined, let come what might, life or death, depth or hight, to live as one, who, in the presence of men and of angels, had taken the holy sacrament, on profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel. He intended to prepare, before his ordination, one hundred sermons. But, as it happened, he had written only one. Of the qual-

ity of this he had some misgivings, and so he sent it to a clergyman of the neighborhood for examination. The clergyman read it, divided it into two, preached it to his own congregation, morning and evening of the Sabbath, and then sent it back to Whitefield, with a guinea, for the service it had done. The clergymen of those times certainly led an easy life, if they could thus preach for their own the sermons of another man. Without religion, moral character, learning, or brains, one might easily set up for a preacher in such an age.

With this one sermon Whitefield at once commenced his work. He went into the pulpit of the church of his own native village—the church in which he had been baptized in infancy, and at whose altar he had first kneeled to receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper in youth. A large congregation were assembled to hear the stripling youth, who had so strangely passed, in their midst, from a tavern servant to a Gospel preacher. There came out to hear him, the old men, who, a quarter of a century before, had been boon companions of his father at the fireside of the Bell Inn. There came out the aged women, who remembered when he was a tiny infant in his mother's arms.

There came out the topers, for whom he had drawn beer at the inn. There came out his old school-fellows, with whom he had been associated in many a wild spree. There came out a promiscuous multitude, who knew him only as a Gloucester boy, and felt curious to hear one who had raised himself, in their village, from obscurity to a Bachelor of Arts, and a minister of the sanctuary. Whitefield arose in the pulpit, and stood before them. He appeared a well-proportioned, though slender youth. His complexion was very fair, his features regular, and his eyes small, lively, and of a dark-blue color. He began to speak. The tones of his voice, surpassing in melody and compass, fell sweetly and powerfully on the ear. His action was remarkably appropriate and graceful. He spoke with earnestness, with vehemence, with passion. He spoke with authority, for he believed himself divinely commissioned to call sinners to repentance. Yea, more; he spoke with an unction from on high. He preached, too, doctrines new in that age—doctrines believed and preached by the apostles of Jesus Christ and early converts to Christianity, and revived by the early reformers, but not known, or not understood, certainly not

preached, by the clergymen of the Church of England in the days of Wesley and Whitefield—the doctrine of the new birth, of the assurance of faith, of the witness of the Spirit. He closed with an impassioned strain of exhortation, inviting his hearers, in love and compassion, to come to Jesus. "I would willingly," said he, "go to prison and to death for you, could I but bring one soul to Jesus Christ. Come, then, to Christ, every one who hears me, come. For your immortal soul's sake—for Christ's sake, come. I could speak to you till midnight. Would you have me go and tell my Master that you will not come; that I have spent my strength in vain? I can not bear to carry such a message to him. I would not; indeed, I would not be a swift witness against you at the great day of account. But I must do it, if you refuse these gracious invitations; I must do it."

The effects of this sermon were amazing. "He preached," said one of his hearers, "*like a lion.*" Some old hunker complained, the next day, to the Bishop, that Whitefield's sermon had driven fifteen people mad. The good Bishop dryly replied, "I hope that kind of madness will not leave them before the next

Sabbath." What more conclusive remark could have been made?

The same week after this first effort at preaching, he returned to Oxford, and proceeded immediately to visit the prisoners and the poor, and to strengthen and confirm the Methodists, whose guidance, in the absence of the Wesleys, was conceded to him. In a few weeks he was invited to London to preach, in the absence of the curate, in the Tower Chapel. Here he was a stranger. The people, on seeing one of so youthful appearance enter the pulpit, began some to sneer and others to laugh outright. But before he had finished his first address to them, the sneers were changed to wonder and amazement, and the laughter to tears. As he came down from the pulpit, they gathered up and blessed him as he passed along, and inquired, on every side, "Who is he? who is he? who can he be?"

While he remained in London, he learned, by letter, from the Wesleys, the condition of things in Georgia, favorably represented, as they were, by John Wesley, on his first arrival, before the difficulties, which drove him away, had matured. Being ardently attached to the Wesleys, and being excited by missionary zeal,

he strongly desired to join his old friends in their work of sacrifice and love, in the new world. Soon after he himself received a letter from John Wesley, containing an indirect invitation to come over and help them. It would seem that Wesley was induced to make the invitation implied, rather than express, from his constant habit of mind to leave all things in the hands of Providence. He, therefore, gave Whitefield merely a hint, in the following words: "Only Mr. Delamotte is with me, till God shall stir up the hearts of some of his servants, who, putting their lives in their hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is so great, and the laborers so few. What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?" Having given this hint, Wesley left Whitefield, who was also a child of Providence, to think the matter out for himself, under Divine direction. Whitefield was not long in making up his mind to go. Having determined to go, he wrote to his friends in Gloucester, informing them of his decision, and imploring them not to attempt to dissuade him. He then visited Gloucester, in person, and had an interview with his friend, the good Bishop Benson, who approved of the enterprise. He then went to Bristol, where he

had spent some time in his youth. Great was the excitement of the people on hearing him preach. Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, people of all denominations, flocked to the church, till no more could be accommodated.

Finding it would be some time before the vessel, in which he had taken passage for America, would be ready, he went, for a while, to serve the Church of one of his friends at Stonehouse, in his native county. From then[illegible] he returned to Bristol, having received many and pressing invitations. As he approached the city, multitudes, some in coaches, and some on horseback, and some on foot, came out some miles to meet him. As he entered the city, they lined the streets and waved their hats and handkerchiefs, and shouted as he passed. The churches, in which he preached, were so crowded, long before the hour appointed, that he could hardly reach the pulpit. The people hung on the rails of the organ-loft, and climbed on the leads of the church. When he preached his farewell sermon, and told them that he was going to the western wilds beyond the Atlantic, and they might see his face no more, high and low, young and old burst into tears. Multitudes followed him home with tears and

blessings. Every body wished to see his face and clasp his hand.

He proceeded from Bristol to London. In that great city the excitement attending his coming was intense. He was waited on by the managers of various charities, and beset with applications to preach in their behalf. He could but consent, for benevolence was an element of Methodism, whose open advocate he was, an element of the religion which he had experienced, and an element of the very nature which God had given him. Thousands upon thousands flocked to the churches. Long before day, people might be seen in the streets, with lanterns in their hands, going to the church, so as to gain admittance before every avenue might be blocked up by the crowd. The people opened their hearts, their hands, and their purses, and money, in astounding sums, was poured into the contribution-box for the poor and the orphan. People stopped him in the aisles and embraced him—followed him to his lodgings, and begged that he would leave them, before sailing for America, some token, if it were but a scrap of writing—his own name, or their name written by his hand—that they might keep it as a talisman. When

he preached his farewell sermon, the immense congregation wept and sobbed aloud.

During all this exciting and unparalleled career of popularity, Whitefield pursued his way sincerely and humbly, seeming unconscious of his great power over the public mind. He was not, however, permitted to proceed long in his work of success unmolested. The clergy of the Established Church, who, at first, had admired and countenanced him, began to grow angry, and to complain. They said that the crowds which followed him, monopolized the churches, leaving no room for the parishioners, and spoiling the pews. Envying his success in preaching charity sermons, they called him a spiritual pickpocket, and said he must work by a charm to get people's money. Others objected to him, because he treated with Christian kindness the Dissenters—visiting them at their houses, and conversing with them, judging, as he says, that the best way to bring them over to the Established Church, was not by bigotry and railing, but by moderation, and love, and undissembled holiness of life. Most of all, were the clergy offended by his preaching the doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith. They gave him distinctly to

understand, that if he did not cease preaching those doctrines, the pulpits of London would be all shut against him.

They spread a report that the Bishop of London intended to silence him. He called on the Bishop, and inquired if any complaint had been lodged against him. The Bishop answered no, and told him to go on in the name of the Lord. Some closed their pulpits against him, but others admitted him, and he continued preaching to undiminished multitudes till he left London, in December, 1737, to embark on board the vessel, which was to sail with him for America. The vessel, with Whitefield on board, sailed from the harbor a few hours only before the ship, which brought Wesley back from America, cast anchor in the same harbor. The two ships passed in sight of each other, but neither of these remarkable men knew that the other was on the deck, at which he was gazing. Wesley, on learning Whitefield had sailed, doubted the expediency of his going to America at that time. But it was too late to make any change of arrangements. So Whitefield went on his way, and Wesley proceeded to London.

CHAPTER II.

WHITEFIELD IN GEORGIA.

ON shipboard Whitefield found a motley crew of officers, sailors, soldiers, and soldiers' families. The officers, at first, considered him an impostor, and treated him with insult and contempt. The first Sabbath was spent by them in drinking, swearing, and gambling. The next week Whitefield met the soldiers daily between decks, read prayers, and preached to them. If any of the soldiers declined attending, Whitefield would turn his particular attention to the children of the careless man, and instruct them in religion. He thus soon won the confidence and the hearts of the soldiers.

Soon a storm arose. All on board was tumult, confusion, and fear—the ship plunging, the furniture tumbling, and the men and women lying all about helpless and distressed by seasickness. Whitefield was every-where among them, encouraging the fearful, and administering to the sick. A change came over the spirit

of the ship. The captain requested Whitefield, the next Sabbath, to hold religious service in the cabin, and granted him the use of his own private room for retirement and study during the rest of the voyage. The captain of the soldiers sent for him to take a cup of coffee in his cabin, and consented that religious services should be held in the quarters of the military officers and gentlemen, as well as between decks for the soldiers.

The ship proceeded to Gibraltar to take in more soldiers for America. While tarrying there, Whitefield was cordially received and hospitably entertained by the governor and military officers. He found, also, a company of pious soldiers, who, for many years, had constituted a species of Methodist society at Gibraltar—meeting for prayer, at first, in dens and caves of the rocks, and, afterward, by free permission of the catholic-spirited and magnanimous governor, in the church. Whitefield preached several times at Gibraltar. The immensity and strength of the rock of Gibraltar, and the sublimity of the adjacent mountains, enlarged his ideas of the great Being who setteth fast the mountains, and is girded about with power, while the heterogeneous mass of

population, collected at that public rendezvous of all nations, made the place seem an epitome of the world.

After sailing from Gibraltar, the captain became so religiously polite and accommodating, that he proposed, in order to save Whitefield the double labor of holding two separate religious services, one in the cabin for the *gentlemen*, and one between decks for the soldiers, to have the drum beat, instead of the "Church-going bell," at the hour of service, when all, officer, sailor, and soldier, would assemble on deck and worship together the God who is no respecter of persons. After this, Whitefield preached with a sea-captain on one side, a military captain on the other, and soldiers and sailors all around him. Wonderful was the change of affairs on shipboard. Swearing gave place to religious conversation. Cards were thrown overboard, and worthless books pitched after them. Bibles and religious books, which had been furnished by the society for promoting Christian knowledge, were freely distributed and gladly read. Before they reached the American coast, a fever alarmingly prevailed among the ship's crew and passengers. Whitefield was again busy in the work of benevo-

lence. All night long he was up, visiting the sick, and administering medicines. The captain, seeing the philanthropic spirit of the man of God, was touched with compassion, and took hold himself of the same work, crawling, with Whitefield, between decks, to administer relief to the sick. At last Whitefield himself fell sick. During his short but severe illness, he proved the truth of that saying of Jesus, "With what measure ye mete shall it be measured to you again." Those whom he had nursed came and watched, day and night, by his side, while others, who were not sufficiently recovered to do any thing more, fervently prayed for him.

After a tedious voyage of more than four months, the ship arrived at Savannah. Before landing, he gathered about him once more his red-coated parishioners, as he called his motley congregation, and preached a farewell sermon, which was heard with tears and blessings. He then went ashore and cast his eyes over the interesting scene before him. Three thousand miles from home, he stood, yet a mere youth, on the shores of the new world. Behind him rolled in billowy surges the Atlantic. Before him extended a continent, whose immensity and grand sublimity had filled the minds

of the old world with wonder and amazement. It was a balmy morning of bland and lovely May. The green sod of the meadows was sprinkled with wild flowers, whose delicate beauty surpassed all he had ever seen in the cottage gardens of England. The old forests, more beautiful and grand than the royal parks of England, abounded in magnificent trees, whose circumference and hight exceeded all his notions of vegetable growth, and whose appearance was strange, and names unknown to him.

From the physical his attention was soon diverted to the moral features of the country. Delamotte, whom Wesley had left behind, and the few who had preserved their garments unspotted amidst the iniquitous circumstances of the colony, received him gladly. On looking over the condition of the colony, Whitefield was surprised at the number, and affected at the destitute condition, of the orphans. Charles Wesley had noticed the same thing, and had concerted with Governor Oglethorpe, before Whitefield thought of going to America, a scheme for an orphan asylum. Whitefield had heard how much good had been accomplished through an orphan asylum by Professor Franke,

in Germany. He found, also, an orphan school among the Germans, in Georgia. He visited it. The master called all the children before him, catechised them, prayed with them, caused them to pray after him, and then all joined in singing a hymn. After this all the children came up to Whitefield, one by one, placed their little hands in his, and bade him good-by. Whitefield had known himself the sorrows of orphanage, and from this moment his purpose was fixed to found an asylum at Savannah. To accomplish this enterprise, he determined to return to England to lay the plan before the trustees of the colony, and to solicit, of the benevolent, funds for the object. He called the people together. With a heart full of sympathy and benevolence, and a voice of sweetness and melody, he preached to them his farewell discourse, promising solemnly, before God, to return again as soon as possible.

He left Charleston on the first of September, and, after a long, dreary, and perilous voyage, during which he suffered every thing but death, he arrived in London some time in December.

CHAPTER III.

WHITEFIELD IN MOORFIELDS.

ON arriving in London, Whitefield immediately waited on the trustees of the colony of Georgia, and made known to them the purpose for which he had returned to England. They highly approved of his projected enterprise, and of his plan for carrying it into effect. It was not doubted but the establishing of an orphan asylum in Georgia would commend itself to the charity and benevolence of British Christians.

Whitefield desired, before proceeding on his collecting tour, to visit Oxford, that he might be ordained priest, to which office he had become eligible, under the hands of his magnanimous friend—the good Bishop Benson. Returning from Oxford to London, he met the Wesleys at a love-feast, in Fetter Lane, on New-Year's eve, 1739. The meeting continued all night, and was distinguished for manifestations of the great power of God. The prejudices on account of his preaching regeneration, existing

against him before he went to America, immediately revived on his return. He could gain from the clergy access to very few pulpits. When he could find a clergyman sufficiently liberal to admit him, he found it still impossible to accommodate, in churches of ordinary size, one-half the people who came to hear him. On one occasion, seeing multitudes of people unable to get into the church, he felt inclined to leave the pulpit, and go into the church-yard, and preach from one of the tombstones. He mentioned the matter to his friends; but they considered it a "mad prank," uncanonical, and subversive of all religious order.

From London he went to Bristol, a wealthy and populous city—the second in England. While there, his attention was directed to the morally-destitute condition of the people of Kingswood. Kingswood was a tract of country near Bristol, containing about four thousand acres, and underlaid with coal mines. The inhabitants were colliers. They were numerous, and utterly uncultivated—heathens in the midst of a Christian country—savages in the neighborhood of a populous city—brutal and uncivilized, surrounded by a refined community—poor and degraded, in plain sight of abounding

wealth and civic luxury. Kingswood was the terror of the city and the country. Few ventured, even in broad daylight, to walk in the neighborhood. None dare provoke or interrupt the colliers of Kingswood. When aroused, these uncouth savages could defy the police of all England. Whitefield determined to go into Kingswood and preach. His friends entreated him not to venture there. But the man who could preach "like a lion," was not afraid of men. He went one Saturday afternoon into Kingswood, and stood upon a little knoll, and in the name of his divine Master, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who, when among men, "had a mountain for his pulpit, and the heavens for his sounding-board," preached repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life, to such as curiosity called around him. His first audience consisted of about two hundred. He went again, and preached to two thousand. Again he went, and met five thousand, who stood before him, with tears streaming down their coal-blacked faces, as he discoursed of Jesus, and of the cross, and of repentance, and of faith, and of hope, and of heaven. He went the fourth time, and he found twenty thousand of these poor children of neglect and of

destitution assembled around the little knoll. Nor these alone. He looked toward the city, and saw multitudes of multitudes hastening out, in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, and mingling with the rude colliers on the plain, around his mound pulpit. The day was fine. The sun shone bright. The people stood around the mound in awe and profound silence, filling him with admiration.

The people from the city flocked around him, after he had concluded his sermon, in such numbers and with such importunity as almost to distract him, and invited him to go to the city and preach in the Bowling Green. Cheerfully he accepted, and lifted up his voice of warning, expostulation, and invitation before thousands, whom the novelty of the occasion had brought together.

By this time the sleepy watchmen on the Church-towers began to arouse and rub open their eyes. Whitefield was turning "the world upside down." They appealed to the chancellor of the diocese to put a stop to the proceedings of Whitefield. The chancellor asks him why he preaches in Bristol without a license from the authorities of the diocese. Whitefield answers that he thought the custom of requiring

or of giving a license to ministers regularly ordained had become obsolete. The chancellor can not deny that the custom has become obsolete, but reads the canon or Church rule on the subject, reminding him that the law is unrepealed, and may be enforced in his case. Whitefield reminds the chancellor that there is also another canon or rule of the Church prohibiting *clergymen from frequenting taverns, getting drunk, and playing cards*, and delicately suggests that if one obsolete rule be revived against him, the other should be enforced against them. Whether this was an argument *ad hominem* in the chancellor's case, I am not informed. It was not answered. The chancellor abruptly terminated the conference by threatening Whitefield with excommunication, if he did not desist from preaching. Excommunication, however, was but an idle threat. It had no terrors for Whitefield. The day of discipline in the Church seems to have gone by. When drunken and gambling clergymen could officiate uncensured at the holy communion, it was too late to excommunicate a minister in good and regular standing for preaching in another's parish. Whitefield, therefore, paid no attention to the excommunicating threat, but preached

in Bristol as long as he pleased, and when business required him to leave, he invited Wesley to come and take his place.

Whitefield's primary business being to collect funds for his orphan school, and he having spent as much time as he could spare at Bristol, he pressingly invited Wesley to repair to his relief, that he might go to London. Wesley having arrived, and having been introduced to the Bristol people, Whitefield left for London. He stopped on his way at Kingswood, to bid farewell to the people to whom he had been an angel of light and love. To his surprise yet gratification he found the people had provided in the woods an entertainment, in honor of his visit. His heart and head being full of orphan asylums and charity schools, he suggested to the Kingswood people the project of founding a free school for their own children. With acclamation, they assented, and those who had the money planked it down, and those who had it not promised labor. They then insisted on his laying the first stone. But as yet no site had been obtained. No matter for that. One of the people pledged his honor that a site should be provided, and Whitefield planted a stone at random, and prayed that against it

the gates of hell might never prevail, and all the people said amen. On his way to London he visited Gloucester, the place of his birth, of his childhood, and of his youth. He was permitted to preach in the church of his native village, to his old acquaintances. After preaching, he proceeded to the font, where he himself had been baptized, to administer the ordinance to an old acquaintance. As he stood before the font, in presence of the congregation, the memory of the past, with thrilling power, came over him. He could not withstand the rush of feeling. He threw aside the book, and poured out from the deep fountains of his own heart a torrent of eloquence, that bore, irresistibly, every thing along with it. This was too plain and too outrageous a violation of *order* to be forgotten or forgiven. He could preach no more in that church. So he went into his brother's field, and preached to multitudes more than could have crowded into the church.

From Gloucester he went to Oxford, where he was treated with abusive and indecent coarseness by the chancellor. Scorning to "answer a fool according to his folly," he went on to London. He was invited, by the good-natured vicar, to preach at Islington. This was the

same church in which Charles Wesley had been rudely repelled from the pulpit by the wardens. These officious gentlemen, clothed with a little brief authority, having succeeded so well in getting rid of Wesley, were preparing to try the same experiment on Whitefield. During prayers, they stationed themselves at the foot of the pulpit-stairs, with teeth clenched, and muscle tense, ready for the tug of war. Whitefield kept one eye on the Prayer-Book, and the other on the wardens. As soon as prayers were over, he arose, gracefully bowed to the wardens, slily winked to the congregation, and marched right out into the church-yard. The people followed in mass, and the gallant and chivalrous wardens were left alone to waste their valor on vacancy.

Finding the pulpits all shut against him, he determined to resort to the fields and commons. There was in the neighborhood a large tract of country, once a moor, or marsh, such as we call a wet prairie. From its nature, it took the name of Moorfields. Gradually it became drained, and in the time of Whitefield it had been partly covered by shade-trees, and intersected by gravel walks, serving as a common or park. By common consent of the police, it

Moorfields. Large Crowd.

was given up for the undisturbed resort of the rabble of London; for a paradise of gamblers, jesters, prize-fighters, and jugglers. There all sorts, sizes, and colors of people might carry on all sorts of tricks, without the fear of the police before their eyes. Whitefield determined to go there one Sunday and preach. His friends told him he would never come away alive. However, he gave notice that he should go. When he arrived, the multitude were there, in their accustomed resort, before him. The crowd was immense. Two of his friends walked one on each side to protect him. By the pressure of the people, they were soon separated from him, and he was left alone. The "rabble" then took charge of him, formed for him a lane between dense masses of human flesh, and conducted him to the middle of the field, where a table had been placed for him to stand on. Finding the table crushed down by the rush of people, they took him to a wall dividing the upper from the lower field, and placed him on it. Standing upon this wall, Whitefield preached to twenty thousand people, who behaved with as much order, regularity, and decorum, as if they had been in a church. That very afternoon, he went to Kennington Common, and

preached to thousands more. From this time till he left England, on his return to America, Moorfields, Kennington Common, and Blackheath were the chief scenes of his action. Moorfields was his favorite pulpit. On one occasion, he preached from the wall to *sixty thousand* persons. His clear and powerful voice, as he poured forth its rich tones of surpassing eloquence, was often heard a mile, and the singing of the vast multitude, as they lustily and with a good will raised their voices in a hymn of praise, was heard two miles.

Having no longer admission to the churches, he was obliged to appeal to his audiences in Moorfields for money to found the Georgia Orphan Asylum. Nobly did they respond to the appeal. On one occasion he collected in Moorfields nearly three hundred dollars—one-third of it in half-pence. At Kennington Common, on another occasion, he got two hundred and fifty dollars—about eighty of it in copper cents. So vast was the sum, and in such small change, that he had to call on lots of his friends to help him carry the money to his lodgings.

In the midst of his glorious career, the time for his embarkation for America arrived. Having collected nearly five thousand dollars for his

orphan asylum, he consigned the care of Moorfields, Blackheath, and Kennington Common, with Bristol and Kingswood, over to his able and beloved friends, John and Charles Wesley, and, about the middle of August, 1739, sailed the second time for America.

CHAPTER IV.

WHITEFIELD'S ITINERANCY.

ABOUT the middle of August, 1739, Whitefield sailed from England on his second voyage to America. After the usual incidents of a sea-voyage, he arrived, on the first of November, at Philadelphia. His fame was there before him; so that no sooner was his foot on shore, than multitudes came together to hear him preach. No church could hold the people. The beautiful public squares, planted with shade-trees, forming now so striking a feature of that elegant city, would, had they then existed, have furnished a resort for Whitefield, preferable to any church in Christendom. But those paradisean parks were not then provided, and Whitefield chose the gallery of the court-house, from which he could address the people, standing dense all along the street. Often he stood there at evening with thousands and thousands before him, while the clear tones of his powerful voice boomed over the waters of the Delaware, and echoed along the shores of New Jersey.

From Philadelphia he went to New York. On his way through New Jersey, preaching all along the route, he became acquainted with William and Gilbert Tennent, and their venerable father. These men were zealous and evangelical ministers of the Presbyterian Church. One of the young men—Gilbert Tennent—became one of Whitefield's coadjutors, in New England.

In New York, Whitefield, failing to obtain admittance to the Episcopal church, resorted to his favorite temple, the open fields, and preached to many thousands. After spending a few days in the city, he returned to Philadelphia, and proceeded on his way south. He traveled by land through Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. He preached on the way at all the villages and cities, and often in the country. Along the route where he was expected to pass, the people thronged, often coming twenty miles to hear him.

On his arrival at Savannah, he proceeded to lay, with interesting ceremonies, the corner-stone of the orphan asylum. He called it Bethesda, "The House of Mercy." He could not, however, wait for the house to be finished

before he entered on his labor of love to the suffering orphans. He obtained temporary accommodation, and immediately received, under his protection and support, forty children. These he had to furnish with food and clothing, and to meet the expenses he must rely on the contributions of the benevolent. He, therefore, returned to Philadelphia to plead the cause of the poor children. On this visit to the city, he got the contribution of the copper, the silver, and the gold out of Franklin. As many of the materials, for building the asylum, had to be purchased in Philadelphia, and carried to Savannah, Franklin thought it would be better to build the asylum in Philadelphia, and bring the orphans to it. Having failed to induce Whitefield to change his plan, he determined to give nothing to the enterprise. He, however, went to hear Whitefield preach. He had in his pocket some copper, some silver, and some gold. Under the eloquent appeals of Whitefield the heart of Franklin was moved, and he thought he would give him the copper. Another appeal, and he determined to give the silver. Another still more powerful came, and he made up his mind to give the gold. At last came the peroration, in which Whitefield

poured forth, from the deep fountains of his soul, a stream of eloquence irresistible as Niagara. Immediately the hat was sent round, and Franklin turned his pocket inside out, and poured into the contribution copper, silver, gold, and all.

Crowned with unexpected success, Whitefield returned to Savannah with his hands full of funds for the institution, on whose interest his heart was so fully set. His fame had, by this time, reached New England, the land of the Pilgrims, and he received earnest invitations to visit Boston. As wonderful results attended his labors in New England, as he often repeated his visits, and as he finally laid down his life on the shores of the Merrimac, it may be interesting to notice, at large, the circumstances connected with his preaching in that region.

New England, as the whole world knows, or ought to know, was originally settled by a people remarkable for their religious character. They were called *Puritans*. The sect of the Puritans originated in Germany, about the middle of the sixteenth century, among the English Reformers, who had fled from the persecutions of Queen Mary. One congregation of the English exiles, who had taken refuge at

Strasburg, determined to use, in their worship, the Prayer-Book, and the usual forms and ceremonies of the Church of England, as it existed in the reign of King Edward. Another congregation, residing at Frankfort, rejected the Liturgy ceremonies and usages of the English Church, and even went so far as to proscribe the reading of the Scriptures in the public worship of the Sabbath. The disputes, on these matters, becoming serious between these societies, they applied to Calvin for advice. He told them the English Liturgy was only the "leavings of Popish dregs," and advised them to attempt a "farther reformation, and to set up something more filed from rust, and *purer*." They followed his advice, and from that time took the name of *Puritans*. When Elizabeth ascended the throne of England, and revived the Protestant religion, these exiles returned, but brought with them a rooted hatred to the Church of England, and a settled determination not to conform to its service, customs, and discipline. Refusing to conform to the established religion, they suffered, under the reign of Elizabeth and James I, severe persecutions. A congregation, under the care of Rev. John Robinson, fled to Holland, where religious

toleration was sanctioned by law. Being not well pleased with Holland, they determined to emigrate to America, where they might worship God, in their own way, without molestation. They intended to settle within the limits of the colony of Virginia, but being driven northward, by a storm, they found it necessary to make a landing near Cape Cod. Before going on shore, they formed themselves into a body-politic, adopted a democratic constitution, chose their governor, and enacted the laws deemed necessary for the promotion of order. They then landed at Plymouth, and commenced the settlement of the country. Others of their brethren, in England, soon followed, and in a few years Puritan settlements were formed all along the coast in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The whole country was laid out in districts, of about six miles square, called towns. Each town became a sovereign corporation, or body-politic, capable of deciding, on all questions affecting its interests, by vote of the inhabitants assembled in town meeting. As near as possible to the center of the town, was erected a large meeting-house, capable of accommodating all the parish. A minister, chosen by the

people, was settled, usually for life, over the parish. A liberal salary was paid. To raise the salary, a tax was assessed on all the people of the town, and collected, with taxes for other purposes, by the legal officer. The Churches were all Congregational, and in early times all the people were Church members. For more than seventy years, all civil offices of trust and of profit were restricted to Church members. The ministers and people were distinguished for piety. They believed the doctrines of the Reformation—the depravity of man, the atonement, the necessity of regeneration, and justification by faith. They, however, held these doctrines in a Calvinian sense, and added to them others strongly marked by the absurdities of the logic of Geneva.

The early Puritans, of New England, held orthodox opinions on experimental religion. Persons were admitted to the Church only on profession and evidence of regeneration. For the first half century after the landing of the pilgrims on the rock of Plymouth, accessions were constantly made to the Churches by the arrival of fresh supplies of Puritan families from England. During the second half century there appeared a gradual decline of relig-

ion among all the New England Churches. The Puritan fathers were gone from the stage of life, and their sons had substituted for the energy and power of experimental religion an inefficient and dull formality. Persons were admitted to the Church, not on profession of a "desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," nor on profession of "seeking the power" while they had "the form of godliness," but by virtue of what was called the "half-way covenant." Persons of mere moral, without any claims to religious pretensions, if they had been baptized in infancy, were admitted as Church members. The qualification for admission became, in fact, not positive, but negative. All who were not "scandalous in their lives" were deemed fairly entitled to membership in the Church. Conversions were very rare, and revivals generally unknown. Under such an administration of ecclesiastical affairs, the Churches were weighed down by an accumulation of formal, worldly-minded, and unconverted members. Often the minister of the parish knew as little of experimental religion as his people. Indeed, it was not thought essential, that a minister should be a converted man. Personal religion was not

deemed an essential qualification for a preacher of the Gospel.

There seems, indeed, to be little ground of choice, at the commencement of the eighteenth century, between the Episcopal Church, of England, and the Puritan Church, of America. Both were suffering under the curse of *legal establishment*. The result of being established by law was the substitution of ceremony and form for experimental and vital godliness.

Amid the general drought, which spread over the land, and during which the streams, fed no longer by the living springs of truth, disappeared, there was one little spot which appeared like the garden of Damascus in the desert. Some hundred miles west of the city of Boston, there lies, in a fairy vale, surrounded by mountains, one of those lovely rural villages, which form the striking, the most distinguishing feature of a New England landscape. In those days there was settled over the parish of Northampton one of the most remarkable men of the last ten centuries.

Jonathan Edwards was a man, whose soul was a perennial fountain, from which flowed incessant living streams of thought and of religious feeling. He was not what the world

usually calls an eloquent man. He had no Boanergean voice to thunder in the ear, nor physical power to "dang to pieces" pulpits and Bibles. Like Paul, of old, he was weak in bodily presence, and in no way remarkable in speech. He stood up, Sabbath after Sabbath, before his people, and reasoned of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. Calmly, solemnly, yet earnestly would he press argument after argument, and appeal after appeal, home upon his hearers, till the whole congregation would be swaying to and fro, and often, by sobs and cries, drowning his gentle voice. Under such preaching there occurred, at Northampton, a great revival, which spread down the valley of the Connecticut to Westfield, Springfield, Windsor, Enfield, and several other places. The work, however, was principally confined to the valley, and the rising cities along the Atlantic were refreshed by no drops from the passing cloud. Except at Northampton, and the few other places visited by the awakening, few persons were added to any of the Churches, and those few could give no account of conviction, nor conversion, nor any other element of religious experience. Universal apathy seemed to have thrown its magic

spell over ministers and people. A darker state of affairs could scarcely have existed.

While the greater number of the ministers were as careless of religion as were the people, there yet remained a few who looked and prayed for a revival of the spirit and life of pure Christianity. Among these stood conspicuous for his sound learning, his generous spirit, and his enlightened piety, Rev. Benjamin Colman, of the Brattle-street Church, Boston.

Dr. Colman graduated at Harvard in 1692, and was one of the most estimable of the sons of that time-honored University. In his religious principles and theological opinions, he was remarkably liberal for that age. He had heard of the glorious revival at Northampton, and longed to see such a work in Boston. He had heard of Whitefield, the youthful, the accomplished, the eloquent stranger, who, in the spirit and power of his divine Master, had been preaching, with unexampled success, from the Hudson to the Savannah. The good old man, now nearly seventy years of age, wrote to Whitefield, at Savannah, earnestly inviting him to visit Boston. Whitefield had long desired to look on that land of world-wide renown, and to see the descendants of the old Puritans. He,

therefore, as soon as he could arrange the business of the asylum for his absence, departed from Savannah, in a ship bound for New England, and after a pleasant voyage along the Atlantic coast, arrived at Newport, in Rhode Island, from whence he proceeded, by land, to Boston.

At the close of a beautiful autumn day, in 1740, Whitefield had arrived within full view of the city of Boston. Its spires were gleaming in the rays of the setting sun. Its neat white dwellings were reflected from the mirror surface of the quiet waters, which nearly surrounded the whole site. Its attendant villages loomed up around the whole horizon. Withdrawing his eyes from their first glance at the city, which lay in full view from the hill on which he stood, he looked down the road before him, and saw a multitude of people—officers of the government, ministers of the Gospel, citizens, ladies, and children—who had all come forth to meet the accomplished stranger, and conduct him, amidst smiles and blessings, to the city. It must have been an interesting hour for the youthful hero of the cross. Three thousand miles from his native land, among entire strangers, he was welcomed to

the renowned city of the Puritans, with demonstrations of honor, which Alexander, or Cæsar, or Napoleon might have coveted. He was coming among them, not the gray-haired, veteran hero of a thousand battles, not the brave warrior from the field of victory, not the monarch with patronage and power in his hand, but the sincere-hearted, pure-minded, and eloquent-tongued Methodist missionary, who had drank, with Wesley, from the pure fountains of evangelical truth, and had now come to lead the thirsty pilgrims of New England to the garden of the Lord,

"Where living waters gently pass,
And full salvation flows."

The evening of his arrival was spent in congratulations and welcomes; but the next day he preached first in the Brattle-street Church, and then at other churches, in order to afford all the congregations an opportunity to hear him. But the multitude so thronged the churches, that he was obliged to resort to his old and favorite pulpit—the open field. So he went out to the commons and preached to thousands of delighted hearers. Having remained a few days, and preached three times every day, he made a brief excursion to several neighboring

villages. He visited Cambridge, and by his thrilling tones of Gospel eloquence, aroused the spirit of Harvard University from the sleep of a century. There occurred, within the college walls, what never occurred before, never since—*a revival of religion*. The good Dr. Colman, in a letter written at the time, says, "The college is entirely changed. The students are full of God, and will, I trust, come out blessings to their generation. Many of them appear truly born again, and some have proved happy instruments of conversion to their fellows. The voice of prayer and of praise fills their chambers; and sincerity, fervency, and joy, with seriousness of heart, sit visibly on their faces. I was told yesterday that not seven, out of the one hundred in attendance, remain unaffected." That was a strange day for Harvard. We have seen, however, such times in other institutions, and it would prove far better, every way, for Harvard, if revivals were now frequent, and encouraged within its influence. The learned and accomplished faculty of that honorable institution would find it an easy matter to maintain order among students, on whom such religious influences, as Whitefield produced, could be

brought to bear. He also visited Marblehead, Salem, Newbury, and Malden. He was absent on this excursion, from Boston, only a week, during which he preached sixteen times, and traveled one hundred and twenty miles. When he returned to Boston, he found the congregations immensely increased. He went to the common, that beautiful and lovely park, the glory of Boston, and stood up under an old elm, and preached to more than twenty thousand deeply-affected hearers. Among those who stood in the crowd, on the common, listening intently to the eloquent words of the man of God, was a sweet-tempered, thoughtful, fair-haired, bright-eyed little boy—one of those children who appear transient strangers on earth, and formed for a fairer sky and a milder atmosphere, than surrounds this sublunary world. He stood listening in deep thought, and with an intensity of unearthly interest. At the close of the sermon, those who stood by him observed that he appeared unwell. They took him up, and carried him home to his mother. As they placed him in her arms, he looked up in her face, and in a sweet voice said, "Mother, I want to go to Mr. Whitefield's God;" and immediately expired.

From Boston, on his return south, Whitefield visited Northampton, to see Edwards and the revival Church. On his way he passed over the ground where now the traveler may see the loveliest villages and cities, and the most varied landscape in the world—Concord, with its deep and quiet river—the river of peace, the river of "Concord"—and its fields, afterward stained with the blood shed in one of the first battles of the American Revolution; Waltham, with its long, wide street, and grand old elms; Marlboro, with its gentle hills and fairy lake; Worcester, with its romantic undulations of surface, covered with happy homes and gardens of exquisite beauty; Leicester, a little "city on a hill," overlooking the whole country from the Atlantic to the Connecticut; and Brookfield, with its prairie-looking plain and gently-winding rivulet. He preached to people gathered from the surrounding country at several of the larger villages, and the third day he stood on the hill overlooking the Connecticut, as it flowed along its delightful valley, where reposes the lovely village of Northampton.

By the people of Northampton he was joyfully received. Here he was at home. The congregation had known what it was to hear a

revival sermon. The gracious visitation, which they had some few years before enjoyed, had passed away, but they were prepared again to open their hearts to receive the words of grace from the messenger of God. Great and glorious was the result. A more powerful work than had ever before occurred at once commenced. The people were overpowered by their own emotions. Some cried out aloud for mercy, and others rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Since the time of the late revival among the people, many children had grown from infancy to mature age. Among them, the children of the faithful and devout members of the congregation of Edwards, the work of grace was most cheering and wonderful.

From Northampton he proceeded along the valley of the Connecticut toward New Haven. He preached at those beautiful places—places which no traveler of taste, when he has once seen them, can ever forget—Westfield, Springfield, Windsor, Hartford, and Middletown. Every-where he met large congregations gathered from a distance of twenty miles, or more, in every direction. He never failed to produce, on the congregations, extraordinary effects.

The people wept, and sobbed, and cried aloud, and went away deeply convicted and penitent for sin. At New Haven he was received, not like an earthly monarch, traveling in state over his dominions, but like a messenger of heaven, sent to invite the lost and wandering children back to their home in bliss. From New Haven he proceeded, by land, preaching all along the way, to New York, and from thence along the villages of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, to Savannah. Having spent a few days in Savannah, in arranging the affairs of the orphan asylum, he took passage for England.

This second visit to America occupied only about one year and a half. During that time he crossed the Atlantic twice, traveled by land twice from Philadelphia to Savannah, and once back to Philadelphia; passed, by sea, from Savannah to Rhode Island; visited all the towns along the coast, from Boston to the Merrimac; crossed the country from the Atlantic to the Connecticut; passed down the Connecticut to Long Island Sound, and then traced the Atlantic coast to the Savannah. In every place where he could find a congregation he preached, often several times, conversed with multitudes

of people, and collected large sums for the orphan asylum.

On Whitefield's second return to England, where he arrived, after a voyage of two months, about the middle of March, 1741, there fell on his spirit the misfortunes growing out of the imprudence and pertinacity of the Calvinistic Methodists, producing doctrinal disagreement between him and Wesley. As we have explained, at length, these matters in the sketch of John Wesley, we need not here say more on the subject.

About the middle of the summer, he, in compliance with pressing invitations, visited Scotland. It seems, however, that, on his arrival in Scotland, those who had invited him thither, so annoyed him by lectures on the solemn league and covenant, and the virtues, orthodoxy, and "divine right" of Scotch Presbyterianism, that he had well-nigh lost, as every reasonable man might, all patience. He broke away from their conference, called on purpose to instruct him in the principles of Church government, and went into the parks and commons in the cities, and the woods and fields in the country, and preached with success—as great success as could be expected at that time

in Scotland—to many thousands of attentive and listening hearers.

From Scotland he went to Wales, and consummated the marriage, which he had before contracted, with Mrs. James, a widow lady—once, as he says of her, a gay lady, but then a despised follower of the Lamb of God. He immediately returned to England.

We have related, on preceding pages, the circumstances and wonderful effects of his preaching in Moorfields. He now determined on a still more daring exploit—the preaching there, not on the Sabbath, but on the holidays. On such days, booths were erected all over the fields, for the exhibitions of mountebanks, puppet shows, caravans, circus-riders, stage-players, and probably singers of negro melodies, if such degraded and degrading exercises were fashionable in those times. Whitefield determined to call away, if possible, the people from so demoralizing performances. On Whitmonday, about six o'clock in the morning, he repaired, with a number of good people to sustain him, to the field, and gave out a hymn. There were about ten thousand people waiting for the buffoon performances to open. Hearing the sing ing, they gathered around him, and listened

attentively and with deep emotion to the sermon. At noon, he returned and found thousands of thousands swarming over the ground. As soon as he began to preach, the booths were deserted, the shows had no observers, and the song-singers no audiences. All went to hear Whitefield preach. At night he returned with equal success. The showmen became enraged. Whitefield had drawn the people away from the sport, and thereby diminished the gains of the exhibitors. This was not to be allowed. They, therefore, came around him, the mountebanks, the merry-andrews, the buffoons, the circus-riders, the puppeteers, the wild-beast keepers, the beer-sellers, the negro-singers, the conjurers, the stage-players, and all beset him at once with discordant noises and offensive missiles. But he preached on without serious annoyance, much to the profit of thousands, who had, probably, never before heard an evangelical sermon. After the close of evening preaching, he retired, with the people who had sustained him by their presence and prayers, to the tabernacle which had been erected in Moorfields for the accommodation of the Calvinistic division of the Methodists, to hold a prayer meeting. It was the custom in those

times, particularly in Whitefield's congregations, for awakened and serious persons to send up to the preachers written notes, desiring prayers. On this occasion he received, he thinks, on a moderate computation, one thousand notes from persons under conviction. Soon afterward, upward of three hundred were received in one day into the society. Thus was the moral courage and the aggressive philanthropy of Whitefield rewarded with abundant success.

In the early part of 1743, he lost his only child—an interesting little boy, about four months old. He had, like a true Christian, devoted the child to the Lord. He hoped, and verily believed, he would live and grow to maturity, and become a minister of the Gospel. He had sent his wife and the child from London to Gloucester, on the way to Wales. After a few days he followed them to Gloucester, proceeded to his brother's house, and with the buoyant and cheerful spirit of a happy husband and a fond father, inquired for his wife and child. The answer to the inquiry fell with crushing power on his heart. The child was dead. His hopes of leaving at his departure one bearing his name to take up the standard

of the cross, fallen from his own dying hand, had thus suddenly perished. He, however, rallied his energies, and preached twice that same day. At evening, just as he was closing his second sermon, the bell tolled for the funeral of the child. To him it was a sad sound. The procession was formed, and proceeded to the church—the same church in which the father was baptized, in which he first approached the table of the Lord, and in which he preached his first sermon. Over the little one the burial service was read. The father and mother then kneeled by the coffin, whose upturned lid presented to view for the last time the fair face of the beauteous dead. They wept and they prayed. They then pressed their lips in a farewell kiss on the pale brow of their only one. The coffin-lid fell, shutting out forever from the face of the lovely one the light of earth, and the body of the child was deposited in the grave, to sleep till the morn of glory to earth's redeemed ones, when father, mother, and child shall arise, all immortal, like the Son of God.

Leaving his child thus at rest, he resumed his extraordinary labors with his usual success. He preached during the year 1743, in various places in England. At Exeter he was preach-

ing, as usual, in the open air, to a multitude of people. Some ship-builders, at work in the ship-yard at some considerable distance, heard his voice, and supposed it some madman. They left their work and went up to hear him. The principal man—a Mr. Tanner—filled his pockets with stones, intending to knock him from his position. He walked boldly up to the crowd and listened, with a stone in his hand, ready to be thrown. He soon, however, perceived it was no madman speaking, dropped the stone, drew nearer, began to weep, and then to cry aloud, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." This same man became afterward an efficient minister of the Gospel. Wishing to improve every opportunity to preach the Gospel to those who most needed it, he went to Hampton, and preached to some twelve thousand people, who had assembled in that place to see a man "hung in chains." Surely, people who could suffer their country to be disgraced in the sight of the universe by so barbarous an execution, greatly needed powerful preaching. No other could do them any good.

In 1744 Whitefield sailed on his third voyage to America. The passage was long and stormy. After being beat and buffeted about by winds

and waves for eleven weeks, the ship arrived at the beautiful bay of Wells, in Maine. Never was weather-beaten seaman more glad than was Whitefield to see the land. The prospect was, indeed, beautiful to the eye. The bay—one of the most spacious on the Atlantic coast—is hemmed in by a semi-circle of pure sandy beach. Beyond the beach extends a long reach of low meadow, waving with tall grass. Beyond the meadow is a long, winding street, stretching along the coast for nearly ten miles, with farm-houses so frequent as to seem one continuous village. Beyond the street appears an evergreen plain of indefinite extent. In the midst of the plain rises Agamenticus—a lofty mountain—covered to its summit with dark evergreens, and forming the landmark first seen by the sailor approaching the Atlantic coast. The ship coasted along the bay toward the city of York. This place was founded and laid out for a magnificent city—the great city of the new world—in 1641, more than one hundred years before Whitefield's arrival. It must have been at that time a "city of magnificent distances;" for it is yet only a small, though beautiful village. As the ship was slowly beating up the bay, Whitefield cast

longing eyes toward the landscape before him, the village, with its white cottages, the evergreen plains, and the blue mountains, and he felt impatient to go ashore. For the sake of gaining a few hours, he left the ship and went on board a small fishing-boat, which immediately put in for the harbor. But the dilatory fisherman suffered the darkness of night to overtake them, and being heedless or unskillful, they missed their way, and were driven and tossed about by winds and waves all night. They had nothing on board to eat, and Whitefield became so hungry he wanted to eat up the boat. Before morning, he fell sick of colic, and when the boat landed he could hardly walk. He was entertained on shore by the physician; and though he was treated with skill and unremitted care, it was several days before he so far recovered as to leave his room. As soon as he could go out, he preached to the people, and immediately thereafter proceeded to Portsmouth. In crossing the Piscataqua ferry, he took cold, and on his arrival at Portsmouth was very sick. An appointment for him to preach that evening was out. His friends thought he would die. His physician, who had accompanied him from York, was

about to administer medicine to him, when he exclaimed, "Doctor, let me go and preach once more, and then come home and die." So up he arose from the bed, and went straightway to the church. Pale and feeble, he arose in the pulpit, and told the people he had come a dying man to bear his dying testimony to the truths of divine revelation. He preached with pathos and with power. It seemed to him to be his last sermon, and he spoke for eternity. The people heard with the deepest interest. There appeared, throughout the assembly, visible and audible demonstrations of strong emotion. When he left the pulpit, the people, expecting no more to see him alive, lifted up their voices, and wept, as if they were looking, for the last time, on the pale face of some shrouded and coffined loved one. As soon as the excitement of preaching subsided, he became, from the violence of the attack, much exhausted. He was taken to his lodgings and laid on a pallet, before the fire. He appeared so prostrated, that at one time those around him said, "He is gone." After a few hours of unremitting attention on the part of his friends, and a council of physicians, he revived. He recovered but gradually. When he reached Boston—

three weeks after his attack—he was still very feeble.

Whitefield, on his first visit to New England, took and carried every thing by surprise. The unconverted portion of the ministers, knowing nothing of experimental religion, yet settled over a majority of the New England parishes, were sleeping at their posts so profoundly as not to get fairly awake, till Whitefield had come and gone again. As they stood rubbing their eyes, the light of the flaming meteor dazzled and amazed them. No sooner was he away, than they began to feel stung by his anathemas against an unconverted ministry, and roused by the "religious stir" which they felt around them. They saw that the old order of things was in danger, and they must bestir themselves to secure the permanence of the "standing order." They began to publish "testimonies" against him. The Faculty of Harvard College united in a testimony against him, denouncing him as "rash, arrogant, censorious, uncharitable, an enthusiast, and a deluder of the people." His worthy friend, Dr. Colman, and some other ministers of Boston, stood yet firm, but many ministers of the neighboring towns united against him. The people, how-

ever, demanded that he should be heard. The churches, therefore, were forced open by popular opinion, and he preached to congregations larger than had ever assembled on his first visit. He preached in Boston, and in all the neighboring towns, and then returned east over the ground he had been obliged, on account of feeble health, to leave untouched, in his late journey from York to Boston, and extended his range along the coast of Maine, as far as North Yarmouth. Returning to Boston, he commenced his journey southward, to Savannah, preaching, as usual, all along the route.

In passing, on this journey, through Connecticut, he had an opportunity to observe something of the intolerance which, I am sorry to say, greatly disfigured the comeliness of Puritanism, especially in Connecticut, for the first two centuries of American history. The Legislature of Connecticut had enacted a most strange law—strange for an American legislature—strange for the time—being near the middle of the eighteenth century. They enacted that no minister should enter any parish, not immediately under his charge, to preach or exhort the people, without the express invitation of the minister and a majority of the parish;

and that any *foreigner*, or stranger, not an inhabitant of the colony of Connecticut, who should presume to preach, teach, or exhort, in any town or society, without the license of the parish minister and a majority of the parish, should be transported, as a vagrant, out of the colony.

Yale College caught the spirit of the Legislature, and, in their zeal for uniformity and conformity to the standing order of things, actually expelled two of their most pious, exemplary, and high-ranked students, for attending, in vacation, while at home with their parents, public worship in the Church of which they were members, but which had separated from the Established Church. About the same time they expelled a student for going to an Episcopal church, to hear his own father preach. The ministers of some of the parishes suspended from communion their members for going to hear Whitefield and other revivalists preach. Such was the spirit of the "land of steady habits," when Whitefield passed through it, on his second tour. But he heeded not the laws of the Legislature, nor of the ecclesiastical associations, but preached as he went, any where and every-where, to as many as would

listen to him. And they came in countless thousands, regardless of the censure of their unworthy magistrates and ministers, and received with joy the tidings of life and salvation, which he, the messenger of God, proclaimed.

Having accomplished his journey to Savannah, he spent some time in putting to rights the affairs of the orphan house. When he had succeeded in the arrangements he judged desirable, he left Georgia for Bermuda, intending to spend some time on that salubrious island for his health. He remained in Bermuda some three months, preaching, and doing good. His health being partially restored, he returned to England, where he arrived about midsummer, 1748.

He remained in Europe, on this visit, about three years, during which time he traveled over most of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, preaching wherever he found means of doing good. His travels and labors were abundant, and his success glorious. About this time he became personally acquainted with the Countess of Huntington, of whom we have given a brief notice, in the sketch of Wesley. She requested Howel Harris to invite him to her house. She

received him with great cordiality, treated him with much respect and honor, appointed him her chaplain, and remained his steadfast friend through life.

In 1751 he made his fourth voyage to America, but remained only a short time, which he spent at Savannah, attending to the affairs of the orphan asylum. On his return to England, he immediately resumed his itinerant labors over the kingdom, and continued moving rapidly from place to place till the first of May, 1754, when he sailed on his fifth voyage to America. He took along with him twenty-two orphans, collected among the poor of England, intending to place them as beneficiaries in his asylum at Savannah. The ship in which he sailed proceeded first to Lisbon, where she remained nearly a month, furnishing him an opportunity, which he usefully improved, to become acquainted with the practical influence of the Roman Catholic religion on a community. The frequently-recurring exhibitions of superstition and bigotry among the people greatly shocked him, and left on his mind no favorable opinion of Roman Catholicism.

Having loosed from Lisbon, the ship, after a short and pleasant voyage, reached Savannah.

As soon as Whitefield had disposed of his emigrant orphans, and arranged matters at the asylum, he started on another tour north, by Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, to Portsmouth. He found a great change had come over the spirit of New England, since his last visit to the country. The opposition to the new doctrines and new measures of the revivalists had died away, and all were ready to receive him with open hearts and outstretched arms. At Boston he preached at six o'clock in the morning, on several occasions, to three or four thousand people. On approaching Portsmouth, he met a cavalcade coming out some distance from the city to welcome his arrival. Every-where he was met with joyful welcome, and every demonstration of respect. With this visit to New England he was delighted. He saw, as he thought, plain indications that Providence had prospered his labors in the country on his former visits. With a cheerful spirit he returned to the south, from whence he embarked for England in the spring of 1755. He remained in Europe till June, 1763. During these eight years, he traveled many times over the United Kingdom of Great Britain, preaching repeatedly at all the places where he

had ever before been, and at every new place, where any door appeared open. He seldom preached less than fifteen times every week. During most of the time he was in very feeble health, sometimes hardly able to ride, at others unable to receive company, and again unable to sit up. It seems surprising that the constitution of any man could stand such incessant traveling and preaching, unless, in the order of Providence, perpetual preaching became—as Whitefield seemed to think—the panacea for the system. In his journeyings over the United Kingdom during this period, he observed the radical and striking changes which Methodism had produced. So early and mature fruits of the labors of the Wesleys, of himself, and of other assistant laborers, encouraged him to devote, as he had done through life, all his powers in the glorious enterprise of arousing the slumbering energies of the British and American Churches.

On the first of June, 1763, he embarked on his sixth voyage to America. After a passage of three months, he arrived in Virginia. To avoid the heat of early autumn, he proceeded to Philadelphia. His health was so feeble, the physician advised him not to undertake the journey

to Georgia, till he recovered his strength. But he could not forbear preaching. He remained in the north a year, visiting New York, Long Island, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and several places in Massachusetts. The opposition which had been active on his second visit to New England had now died away, and he was everywhere graciously received. Even Harvard College gave him a formal vote of thanks for a present of books, complimenting his course toward the College as one of kindness, candor, and generosity.

He arrived in Savannah in the early part of 1765. All things about the asylum seemed going on to please him. He was greatly cheered at the condition of things. A project was formed for elevating the orphan school to the rank and dignity of a college. To accomplish this magnificent design, it was judged better for him to return immediately to England. So he took passage, for the sixth and last time, for England, and after a very short and pleasant voyage, reached his native land, on the 5th of July, 1765.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAST LABORS OF WHITEFIELD.

IT is a fact interesting and somewhat curious, that the founders of Methodism were, through life, deeply interested in the cause of education. Wesley made provision, by the Kingswood institution, for a system of education for the children of the people under his care. Fletcher and Benson were, during a part of the life of each, connected with literary institutions. The fathers of American Methodism were not wanting in attention to the educational wants of the people. Asbury and Coke early founded a college. The great and good—who were prominent in influence since our own memory, but now departed—Emory, Fisk, Ruter, and Roberts, manifested, in every way possible, their interest in the cause of education. The evidence of the attachment of Methodists to literature, if other evidence were wanting, may be found in the existence of numerous colleges and seminaries, founded and sustained wholly by the private contributions of the American

Methodist Church. The Methodist Church in this country is not yet three-quarters of a century old. Though attempts to found institutions were made during the first half century, yet little or nothing was accomplished till within the last twenty-five years. All that has yet been done, has been effected by voluntary effort. In very few instances has the state done any thing whatever for Methodist colleges. The ministers and the members of the Church have done the work. Surely, indifference to the interests of education can not be charged on Methodism.

The last years Whitefield spent in Europe were devoted principally to matters connected with colleges. He first attempted to obtain a college charter for the Georgia orphan school. He presented a petition through Lord Dartmouth—the patron peer of learning in that day—to the privy council. He explained the advantages and the necessity of a college to the people of the southern colonies. He exhibited the condition of the orphan school, for which he had already collected funds amounting to sixty thousand dollars. After much delay, the President of the council answered, that if a charter were granted, it must contain

a provision, never to be annulled, that the head of the college should be an Episcopalian, and that the prayers and religious exercises of the institution should be according to the established forms of the Church of England. Whitefield replied that he never could nor would accept a charter on those terms. The greater part of the funds already collected had come from Protestant Dissenters. To Protestant Dissenters must the institution still look for patronage and support. He had again and again declared that the college should be placed on a broad and liberal foundation. He thought that such a restriction as the premier proposed in the charter would be inconsistent with the long-established, mild, and incoercive genius of the British government. He knew well that the Americans, from their unconquerable attachment to toleration principles, would never sustain a college founded on so narrow and bigoted a base. Indeed, such an institution would be abhorrent to the avowed, habitual, and cherished feelings of his own heart. Therefore, he would not accept such a charter, nor would he trouble the King's government any more about the matter. He would turn the charity under his control into a more generous

and useful channel. It appears that he formed, at this time, the design of establishing, without a charter, a public academy, or free seminary, in connection with the orphan asylum. He did not, however, live to consummate his plans.

From the affairs of his Georgia college, his attention was diverted to the University of Oxford, at which a strange event had just occurred. Six students had been expelled for holding Methodistical doctrines, and for Methodistical measures, such as praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures, and singing hymns in private houses. Whitefield, on this occasion, wrote an able letter to the faculty, placing them in a light very uncomfortable to themselves. He advised them, as they had expelled six pious students for extempore praying, to proceed with the work of expurgation, and expel others for extempore swearing. He also gently reminded them, that it might be well to inquire into the character of a certain reverend member of their University, who had, in a fit of drunkenness, ridiculed revealed religion, lest the public should discover, that, with the faculty at Oxford, a drunken and Deistical reviler was more safe, and in greater favor, than a Methodist.

About the same time, his attention was called to the Countess of Huntington's college at Trevecca, designed to educate pious young men for the Christian ministry. Into the project of the Countess he entered heartily—approving and aiding the enterprise. He also had to dedicate several chapels which the Countess had erected in several parts of the kingdom. In addition to these various interests, which occupied his attention and time, calls were made on him from various parts of the kingdom for a visit. In answer to these pressing invitations, he traveled and preached wherever his health, which was very feeble, would permit. In the mean time his wife fell sick of fever, and was suddenly removed from him. He preached her funeral sermon, and expressed a wish that he himself might soon follow her to the land where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Though he had failed in the great purpose of his visit to England—the obtaining of a charter for the college in Georgia—yet, knowing that the affairs of the orphan school might need his attention, he sailed, in September, 1769, on his seventh and last voyage to America.

On his arrival at Savannah, he found all things pertaining to the asylum, and to the general interests of the great mission, in which he was engaged, in the most encouraging condition. There had been erected, under the superintendence of the Governor of the colony, during Whitefield's absence, in England, two wings to the main building, each one hundred and fifty feet long. The funds were abundant, the pupils were healthy and orderly, the administration of affairs efficient and prudent, the colony was improving, the people were in good spirits, and all things continued to produce, in Whitefield, the most exhilarating emotions. To avoid the heat of a southern summer, he proceeded north. At Philadelphia he was received by all Churches and parties with enthusiastic joy. Even the Episcopal pulpits were freely opened to him. Invitations were poured upon him, from all quarters, to visit numerous places far and near. He made a circuit of one hundred and fifty miles around Philadelphia, and then went to New York. There he found congregations larger than ever before. In accordance with pressing invitations, he made a circuit of more than five hundred miles, visiting places he had never before

seen. He passed up the Hudson, amid its grand scenery. The deep and mighty river flowing irresistibly on through the magnificent highlands, affected him with emotions of intense sublimity. In the depth of his soul he exclaimed, "O, thou wonder-working God!" At Albany and Schenectady, he preached to large and attentive congregations. From the Hudson he passed over to the beautiful valley of the Housatonic, and preached at Barrington, and other ancient and beautiful villages along that romantic and delightful valley. He then returned to the banks of the Hudson, and preached at Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, and Peekskill. All this region was new and, to him, deeply interesting. When he reached New York, on the conclusion of his tour, he was in high spirits. In a few days he started for Boston. On his arrival at the Puritan city, he was received with extraordinary cordiality. All opposition seemed at an end. He would have made only a short visit, and then proceeded southward; but so earnestly was he beset with importunities to remain, that he concluded to remain a few weeks and revisit the places, in Massachusetts, where he had formerly preached. There seemed to loom up before him, in the

future, a prospect of usefulness more extended and glorious than he had ever before seen. New England never seemed to him so lovely. Her valleys seemed decked with uncommon beauty, her hills seemed so green, her villages so elegant, and her people so kind, intelligent, and interesting. He could have consented to take up his abode in that fair land, and return to old England no more. He went to Portsmouth, in the state of New Hampshire, from whence he wrote, to a friend in London, the letter which proved his last. In it he says, that, though his health is feeble, yet a ride of sixty miles had improved it. He preached in Portsmouth every day for a week. On Saturday morning, September 29, 1770, he left Portsmouth on his return to Boston, intending to spend the Sabbath in Newburyport. Passing through Exeter, he was earnestly solicited to preach. He consented. As no house could hold the multitude that came together, he went into the open field, and spoke for two hours. It was a powerful and eloquent discourse, and proved to be his last. Proceeding, after preaching, on his journey, he arrived at Newburyport at evening. Being fatigued by his ride and his laborious effort at Exeter, and having an

appointment to preach the next day, he early retired to rest. He slept till two o'clock in the morning, when he aroused his traveling companion—Mr. Smith—and asked him to raise the window, as he felt symptoms of an attack of asthma, and found difficulty in breathing. He said he had taken cold, but he hoped a day or two of rest would relieve him, though he must preach that day, as the appointment had been given out. He then sat up a few moments in bed, and prayed that God would bless his preaching where he had been, and bless his preaching that day, and bless the orphan school, and bless the Methodist societies and chapels in Europe, and bless all his coadjutors and friends. He then laid down and slept till past four. About five, Rev. Mr. Parsons, in whose house he lodged, hearing some stir in the chamber, came up, when Whitefield said to him, "I am almost suffocated. My asthma chokes me so I can hardly breathe." Soon after he said, "I am dying," and suddenly expired.

The melancholy intelligence soon spread over the town. The bells told a solemn knell, and sadness sat on every face, and tears streamed from every eye. Hundreds came to the house

of mourning to look on the face of him whose eloquent voice they could hear no more. On the day of his burial the bells all tolled their plaintive knells, the ships displayed their signals of mourning, the business of the city was suspended, and thousands assembled to pay the last rites to the man of God. The long procession wound around the streets of the city, from the house in which he died to the church of the Rev. Mr. Parsons. After the funeral services were performed, the body of the great and good man was deposited in a tomb constructed beneath the pulpit, to rest till the day when the dead shall rise again.

Thus lived, thus labored, thus died, and thus was buried George Whitefield, a man whose like the world has seldom seen. He was endowed with genius of a high, a very high order—the genius of eloquence. He excelled, not as a thinker, a writer, or a manager, but as a preacher. His elocution was perfect. Not a word was at fault; not an emphasis misplaced; not a syllable incorrectly pronounced; not a tone erroneously inclined. He used, in speaking, much action, generally appropriate and always striking.

The secret of his unbounded popularity and

unparalleled success, as a preacher, may be found partly in the impassioned fervor, the unquestionable sincerity, and the solemn earnestness of his manner. When he stood up on some rising knoll, in the open field, and saw before him twenty thousand human souls, he looked on them all as sinners, exposed to perdition. He preached to them as if he supposed they might never hear another sermon. So intense were often his own emotions, that he would appear to lose all command of himself. He would weep bitterly, and appear as if his whole frame were trembling with dissolution. Recovering, he would say, "You blame me for weeping; but how can I help it, when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are on the verge of destruction, and, for aught I know, you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you!"

Mr. Hume, who, though a skeptic, was often induced, by his love of eloquence, to hear Whitefield, says, that once, after a most earnest and impassioned appeal to the sinner, he paused awhile, as if in deep thought, and then said, "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven. Shall

he not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all this multitude, reclaimed from the error of his way?" Then stamping with his foot, and lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, he exclaimed, with an imploring voice, "Stop, Gabriel, stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God."

He often turned transient incidents to powerful effect. As he was once preaching to an immense congregation, assembled in a large chapel, dark thunder-clouds came suddenly flitting by, throwing their grim shadows over the scene. He stood looking a moment at a shadow gliding over the floor, and then exclaimed, "See that emblem of human life! It was there for a moment, concealing the brightness of heaven from our view, but it is gone. And where will you, my hearers, be when your life has passed, like that dark cloud? O, sinner, by all your hopes of happiness, I beseech you to repent. Let not the wrath of God be aroused! Let not the fires of eternity be kindled against you!" At this moment a flash of lightning played over the corner of the pulpit. Pointing to it, he exclaimed, "See there! It is a glance from the angry eye of Jehovah!"

Presently a tremendous crash of thunder broke over the building. Raising his finger in a listening attitude, he exclaimed, "Hark! Did you hear that? It was the voice of the Almighty, as he passed by in his anger!" Then dropping on his knees, and covering his face with his hands, he appeared lost in silent, intense prayer. Rapidly passed the storm away. The sun shone forth brilliant, and the beautiful rainbow spanned the heavens. Rising again to his feet, and pointing to the heavenly arch, as it was seen through the chapel windows, he said, "Look upon the rainbow, and praise Him who made it. Very beautiful is it in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heavens about with glory, and the hands of the Most High have bended it."

Eloquence like this could not fail to move a people accustomed to listen to written prayers, and dull and spiritless readings of dry sermons. It often, however, happens that the effects of such talent as he possessed, in so great excellence, are evanescent. It was thus with Whitefield. He accomplished a vast amount of good by his untiring zeal and irresistible eloquence. He could draw tears from eyes unused to weep, and money, for charitable purposes, from hands

unused to give. His great power was often brought into requisition for pleading the cause of the poor, the distressed, the unfortunate. If a city had suffered from a destructive fire, he was ready to appeal to the public for relief. If Christians, in the intolerant dominions of some bigoted monarch, suffered confiscation and exile, he was on hand to preach in their behalf. The widow, the orphan, the outcast, the persecuted, all shared the fruits of his transcendent power to awaken public sympathy. Yet he laid few plans for enterprises of benevolence, to be prosecuted by others after his death. The only institution he labored to make permanent—the orphan house in Georgia—survived him but a few years. It was burnt down, and never rebuilt.

He never aspired to be the leader of any religious organization. The societies of Calvinistic Methodists, in connection with him in England and Wales, were under the guidance of Lady Huntington, rather than of Whitefield. He seemed to feel that his business was not to form societies, but to preach; not to organize an ecclesiastical system, but to convert sinners. He wrote but little, and that little is no way remarkable for strength, or taste, or eloquence.

He committed his sermons to the ear of the people, as the Cumean sibyl did her oracles to the wind-driven leaves, regardless of gathering them up for future purposes. Preaching was his ruling passion. He cared nothing for money. He was once offered a salary of four thousand dollars a year, if he would settle in Philadelphia, with the privilege of "ranging" half the time, but he refused it. A lady in Scotland offered him, as a personal gift, a fortune of thirty-five thousand dollars, but he declined receiving it. He cared nothing for applause. It mattered not to him whether the world caressed or persecuted him, if only he could see sinners converted. He cared nothing for ease, or what the world calls pleasure.

For many years before he died his health was extremely poor. He often traveled hundreds of miles, and preached fourteen or fifteen times every week, when he was so sick that he could hardly sit up after preaching. Most other men, however zealous, would, in his condition of health, wholly retire from public life. While we think, as we have said, his influence much less permanent than that of Wesley, we would, by no means, undervalue his labors. Methodism owes him much. He was the earliest

and most efficient coadjutor of Wesley. He led the way in the great measures of field-preaching, so effective in early times. By his eloquence he aroused the attention of the slumbering Churches of Europe and America.

The only incidents in his remarkable life, unpleasant to remember, are those connected with the disagreement between him and Wesley on the Calvinian controversy. This controversy produced, for a short time only, estrangement of feeling. Such men, however, as Wesley and Whitefield could not long remain estranged. They agreed to disagree on a few points, and to agree on all others. They never materially disagreed in measures.

If they that, in this world, "turn many to righteousness," in the world to come "shine as the stars forever and ever," how dazzling bright must be the crown that decks the brow of George Whitefield! Hundreds, on earth, met him, as he was revisiting the scenes of former labors, and acknowledged him as the means of converting them from the error of their ways; but countless thousands more must, ere this, have met him in the heavenly world, and hailed him as the honored instrument of Providence in their salvation.

JOHN FLETCHER.

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Chapter I.

The Early Life of Fletcher.

Nativity. Adventurous Spirit.

JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLECHERE, or, as he is more generally known by his English name, John Fletcher, was born in 1729, at Nyone, not far from Geneva, in Switzerland.

From his earliest childhood he exhibited remarkable traits of character. He was active, sprightly, and talented. Like other bright and spirited children, he was bold in enterprise and daring in adventure, knowing nothing of fear, and reckless of danger. He was often thus led into acts and scenes of danger, from which his escape seemed wonderful. When but a child he ventured, with his brother, to row, in a boat, out into the Lake of Geneva. They rowed on, unsuspicious of danger, till the last line of shore faded from sight, and the illimitable expanse of water was spread around them. It

was a cloudy day, and, having no compass they knew not, when once out of sight of land, the way back. Intending to return, they rowed on, but could not tell whether they were approaching home, or receding, with every stroke, farther from land. Night was rapidly coming on—night, starless and dark, with clouds portending storm. As the tired brothers were resting, for a moment, in gloomy anxiety, on their oars, they heard the sound of the evening bells of Geneva. They could see no sign of land, but they knew well those sounds, and turning their boat in the direction, whence the chime bound over the waters, they arrived safe, though late, at the city.

When a youth, he undertook, with three or four companions, to swim to a rocky island in the lake, some five miles from shore. With much exertion he reached the place, but found the rocky shore so steep and smooth as to afford no means of climbing up. He swam around and around, till nearly exhausted, when he found a place where, with much difficulty, he effected a landing, and aided his companions to get on shore.

He once went alone to swim in deep water. A ribbon, with which his hair was bound up,

became loose, and by some means became wound about his legs. For a long time he strove in vain to disentangle himself. When he had become nearly exhausted the kink gave way, and released him from danger.

He passed some time, in his youth, near the Rhine. The river, at that place, was broad, and extremely rapid. He was accustomed to trust himself often on its waters, but was careful to keep near shore, lest the rapid current should overpower him. Once, being less careful than usual, he was drawn into mid-channel, and borne along the rapid current. Having sustained himself as long as he could, he cast about for a landing-place, but found the shores so rough and rocky, and the current so rapid, he could not land without the risk of his life. He, therefore, suffered himself to be borne along, till he saw a fine, smooth creek, into which he was carried by a powerful current. This creek proved a mill-race. He was borne on amidst the piles, on which the mill stood. Striking violently one of the timbers, he was rendered senseless and borne on below the mill, and thrown ashore in an eddy, where he recovered without serious injury, or even much fatigue.

It would seem that guardian angels, unseen, yet powerful, are ever present to protect the children of promise, whom God sets apart for his great work.

Fletcher early exhibited acute moral sensibilities. Having, one day, displeased his father, and fearing chastisement, he ran away and hid. After a time he began to reflect seriously on his conduct. "What," said he, "have I run away from my father? Perhaps I shall live to have a son who will run away from me." He immediately came forth, went voluntarily to his father, confessed his fault, and was forgiven. But it was long before the impression, made on his mind by his own reflections, wore away.

One day, when not more than seven years old, he unfortunately had, as children often have, a disagreement with one of his brothers. He retired, at night, with the remains of ill feeling still about him. The nursery maid, on putting him in bed, expostulated with him on his unamiable state of feeling toward his brother. After she went away, he lay, for a time, in deep thought, then arose from his bed, fell on his knees, and prayed earnestly to Heaven for pardon. Becoming calm, he went to his brother, threw his arms about his neck,

kissed him affectionately, and asked his pardon. Never again was he known to have a quarrel with his brothers.

When he arrived at the proper age, he was placed at school in the college at Geneva, to be educated for the ministry. His early-developed and strongly-marked religious sentiment pointed him out as one peculiarly qualified for the holy calling, and gave encouraging promise of success. But before he had finished his studies, his thoughts became entirely diverted from the ministry, and he determined to enter the military service. It would appear, from a few hints he has given, that there were several reasons in his mind for declining the ministry. He entertained a very exalted opinion of the dignity and importance of the work of the ministry, and felt unqualified for so high and holy a calling; he disapproved of the ambitious and worldly motives through which his parents had been induced, as he thought, to dedicate him to the ministerial service; and, lastly, he could not subscribe to the doctrines of Calvinian predestination, which he must profess in order to be admitted to holy orders in Switzerland.

Determining to enter the military service,

he proceeded to Lisbon, gathered a military company of his countrymen, offered the services of himself and companions to the King of Portugal, and was appointed captain. Arrangements were hastening for the departure of himself and company to Brazil. The very morning appointed for sailing, the maid-servant of his boarding-house carelessly let fall a tea-kettle of hot water on his foot and leg, utterly disabling him. The ship sailed without him. It would seem that the accident was overruled for good; for if he had sailed in that ship he must have perished. Neither ship nor sailor was ever heard of after she left the port of Lisbon.

As soon as he recovered from his misfortune, he went to Flanders, and was offered a commission in the Dutch service. But before he had entered on the service, peace was made, and his military career was over. Having now nothing to do, he concluded to go over to England and study the English language. He took letters of introduction to gentlemen in England, but they did him no good. The surly and boorish officers of the customs took them from him, telling him all letters must be sent by the mail. Neither he, nor those in company

with him, could speak a word of English. His funds were all uncurrent in England, and he could not get them changed through his utter ignorance of the language. In this perplexity, he happened to hear a stranger speak French. Unsuspicious of fraud, he confided his purse to the stranger to get the money exchanged. On mentioning to his companions what he had done, they told him he would never see money-changer nor money again. In a few minutes, however, the stranger returned, with the full amount intrusted to him, in current English funds. Inquiring for some place suitable to obtain an English education, he was recommended to Mr. Burchall, a very worthy gentleman, who kept a school in Hertfordshire. With Mr. Burchall he remained nearly two years, learning the English language, and becoming acquainted with English literature. His vivacity, his polished manners, his classical tastes, his gentle spirit, made him a universal favorite in the neighborhood. After having acquired a good knowledge of the English language, he was appointed, through the influence of a friend, tutor to the two sons of Thomas Hill, Esq., of Tern Hall. In the family of Mr. Hill he soon became a favorite, and remained for

some years. No other individual, more than himself, was entitled to such distinction.

Fletcher was remarkable for piety in early life, being converted, as he thought, at the early age of seven years. But the corruption which was in the world, and that which was in his own heart, soon diminished, if it did not erase, the first characters grace had written on his soul. He became formal and ceremonious. All his hopes of salvation rested on his prayers and his devotions. He knew little of the fall and ruin in which every man is involved, of the necessity of a Redeemer, and of the way of salvation by faith. Falling in company with some Deists, he imbibed their sentiments. He remained, however, under the influence of these sentiments only a few weeks, and then resumed the regular attendance at Church and at the communion. There appeared, as he thought at this time, some sparks of true love to God—some germs of genuine faith; but a connection with worldly characters, and an undue anxiety to promote his secular interest, prevented the growth of these Christian graces. He was not, as he thought, without some religion; he did harm to no one; he wished every body well; he governed his passions; and, if he was not

so religious as some others, it was because he believed such a degree of religion unnecessary. From this condition of mind he was startled, by a dream, which constrained him to acknowledge the hand of God. The heavens over his head seemed darkened; in terrific majesty rolled the clouds along; in awful grandeur rumbled the thunders, and a trumpet-voice, as of a mighty angel, exclaimed, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." In a moment, the earth and sea gave up their dead. The universe seemed crowded with living beings, rising by millions, from the long sleep of ages. While gazing in astonishment on earth's countless multitudes, he seemed himself raised up with them in mid-air, from whence he saw earth, with all her works, consuming with fire, the heavens passing away, and the very elements melting with fervent heat. He looked again, and saw the Son of God, coming in majesty and glory to judge the nations. Before him went ten thousand times ten thousand angels, and countless myriads of glorified spirits followed in the train. Amid the profound silence of universal nature, the Son of God ascended the tribunal of judgment. The multitudes spontaneously separated into two distinct companies. To the

one, the Judge sternly uttered the awful malediction, "Depart, ye cursed." In an instant, there opened beneath the feet of the unhappy ones a yawning gulf, deep, dark, and fearful.

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed."

To the others, the Judge, with a sweet and tender voice, pronounced the welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Fletcher looked intently on the happy host, and exclaimed, "Joyful children of light, exalted in triumph with your Redeemer, you are entering into rest." He looked at them till they were lost from his sight in the dazzling splendor of light that surrounds the throne of the Eternal. As he stood gazing after them, an angel from the heavenly host stood before him, and said, "Slothful servant, what dost thou here? dost thou presume to follow the Son of God, whom thou hast served only with thy lips, while thy heart was far from him? Ex-

amine thy heart, and see if thou truly lovedst God. Hast thou a living faith in the Redeemer? Are not pride and self-love the motives of thy good works? Withhold no longer from God the glory due him. Give him thy heart. Become a new creature." The angel then departed from him, and he awoke.

None but infidels would deny that God may speak to man "in dreams and visions of the night." There is often made on the mind by a dream, an impression which waking reflections might fail to produce. Fletcher was deeply impressed by this vision. He was more than usually thoughtful and anxious. The agitation of mind became more intense on one Sabbath day, and to divert his attention, and dispel the gloom that overshadowed him, he attempted to copy some music, when a religious servant of the family, entering the room, said to him, with simplicity and Christian boldness, "Have you forgotten, sir, what day this is? It appears to me that the Lord's day should be sanctified in a different manner."

The sterling character of this servant, his zeal, his benevolence, his patience, and the secret energy which accompanied his words deeply affected Fletcher, and convinced him

more than ever of the wrong state of his mind. From this time, he prayed earnestly, in sincerity, in repentance, and in faith, seeking the Lord with all his heart. He forsook "the gay world," and gave up himself to devotion. He would retire from the fashionable company that frequented Tern Hall, and seek in the solitude of the garden or of the grove, a place for prayer and contemplation. Every Sabbath, he would attend the parish Church, some miles from Tern Hall. At the close of service, instead of riding home in the family carriage, which was always in waiting, he would walk by an unfrequented path, along the banks of the Severn, conversing with his own heart, and with nature, and with God.

On one occasion, he accompanied the family of Mr. Hill to London. Stopping at St. Albans, he walked out into the town, and did not return till the carriage had gone on. A horse had been left for him, and he followed after, but did not overtake the family till night. Mr. Hill inquired what had detained him. Fletcher answered, that he had met a poor woman, who talked so sweetly of Jesus Christ he could not forbear listening to her. "I shall wonder," said Mrs. Hill, "if our tutor does not by and

by turn Methodist." "Methodist!" said Fletcher, "Methodist! pray, lady, what is a Methodist?" "The Methodists," replied the lady, "are a people who pray from morning till night." "Then," answered Fletcher, "I will find them out, if they be on earth." Soon after this, he found a Methodist society, and at once connected himself with it. In the class meeting, he was fully instructed in evangelical principles, the true doctrines of grace, the way of salvation by faith. He soon became more spiritual-minded and devotional, and emerged from darkness and doubt into the full light of Gospel truth, and firm confidence in God.

Under the influence of his revived religious sentiments, he began again to be deeply exercised in mind on entering the Christian ministry. Methodism furnished him an antidote to Calvinism. By the grace of God, he could undertake a work, which had formerly seemed wholly beyond his ability, and he no longer was troubled with worldly and interested motives. There is no evidence, so far as I can ascertain, that he ever yet had seen Wesley; but he at this time wrote to him for counsel and instruction. The answer of Wesley is not preserved in the collection of his writings.

There is, however, evidence that Wesley encouraged him to proceed. He, therefore, immediately began to preach and exhort among the people to whom he could gain access in the neighborhood, and was soon after ordained by the Bishop of Bangor. Immediately after his ordination in London, one Sabbath forenoon, learning that Wesley was without help at West-street, he proceeded to meet him, and aided him in the communion service that very day. This is the first time, so far as I can ascertain, these great and good men ever met. From this time, their souls were knit together, like the souls of David and Jonathan. Wesley deemed the meeting of himself and Fletcher as a special arrangement of Providence, for the accomplishing of the great work for which God raised them up. Among modern Methodists, the names of Wesley and Fletcher are inseparably associated. They were very different, and yet equally adapted to the work God had given them to do.

After his ordination, Fletcher still continued for some time at Tern Hall, preaching occasionally in the neighboring parishes. He was not at first popular as a preacher. His pronunciation of the English language was not yet

good, and his earnest, zealous, and plain manner of speaking, so different from the usual style of English clergymen at that time, did not please the people. He preached more frequently at Madely than at any other place. This was a large village, some ten or fifteen miles from Tern Hall. He became, during his occasional visits, much attached to the people of this place, though they would seem in no way particularly interesting.

On one of his visits, in company with the family of Mr. Hill, to London, he turned aside to pay a visit to the eccentric and distinguished Mr. Berridge, of Everton. He introduced himself to the good vicar as a new convert to evangelical truth, and asked his instruction and advice. From his language and manner, Mr. Berridge readily perceived he was a foreigner, and asked him of what country he was. "I am a Swiss," said Fletcher, "from the canton of Bern." "A Swiss, from the canton of Bern!" replied Berridge; "then perhaps you can tell me something of a countryman of yours—Mr. John Fletcher—of whose talents, learning, and piety, Mr. Wesley speaks in terms of high eulogy." "Yes," said Fletcher, "I know the young man well. Did Mr. Wes-

ley know him as well as I do, he would not speak of him in such terms; for, I assure you, sir, John Fletcher is more obliged to the partial friendship of Mr. Wesley, than to his own merits." "You greatly surprise me," said Berridge, "in speaking so coldly of a countryman, of whom Mr. Wesley speaks so warmly." "I have the best reason in the world," said Fletcher, "for speaking as I do; for I am John Fletcher himself." "Very well, then," said Berridge, "if you are John Fletcher, you must do me the favor to preach for me to-morrow; and when we become better acquainted, I shall be able to judge for myself, on whose opinion to rely—your own, or that of your friends." The acquaintance thus commenced between Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Berridge, was continued in friendship, in spite of the Calvinian controversy, till death.

He remained in the family of Mr. Hill till 1759. He had gradually grown in the affections and esteem of all who became acquainted with him. Mr. Hill appreciated him highly, and was anxious to obtain for him an eligible settlement in the ministry. At last the parish of Dunham, in Cheshire, became vacant, and Mr. Hill, with a joyful countenance, hastened

to Fletcher, and told him it was at his service—a small parish, with light labor, and a salary of two thousand dollars per annum. Fletcher thanked his patron most cordially, but added, "Alas! sir, Dunham will not suit me. There is too much salary—too little work." "Few clergymen," said Mr. Hill, "decline a call for such reasons. Would you, then, like Madely, where there is twice as much labor and only half as much money?" "Nothing would suit me better," said Fletcher. "I desire," said Mr. Hill, "to accommodate your views and feelings. If you prefer Madely, the present vicar—Mr. Chambers—will gladly exchange it for Dunham, and to Madely you may go." He, therefore, went to Madely, where he remained for life, refusing, repeatedly, more lucrative and honorable places, which were frequently offered him. In this he gave abundant proof that he entered the ministry for no worldly or ambitious reasons, but solely to glorify God, and save souls.

CHAPTER II.

FLETCHER AT MADELY.

MADELY is a populous mining and manufacturing village. The people were mostly engaged in collieries and iron-works. At the time Mr. Fletcher settled in the parish, the population were generally ignorant, depraved, and wholly inattentive to religion. Their morals were little, if any, better than those of the colliers of Kingswood, before Whitefield's and Wesley's labors among them. Drunkenness and brutal amusements were common. Fletcher gives a startling description of the occupation of some of the inhabitants. "A club of men blow by the hour clouds of smoke out of their mouth, or wash it down their throat by repeated draughts of intoxicating liquor. The strong fumes reach their heads. Some stagger home; others keep the field, though one is worked up to the fierceness of the lion, and another brought down to the filthiness of the swine.

"In one place inhuman sport is afforded by an unhappy bird, fixed at some distance, that

the sons of cruelty may exercise their merciless skill in its lingering and painful death; or by two trained up and high-fed for the battle, to whose feet steel talons, sharper than those of the eagle, are barbarously fastened. In another place, the multitude is entertained by two brawny men, who unmercifully knock each other down, as if they were oxen appointed for the slaughter, and continue the savage play till one, with his flesh bruised and his bones shattered, bleeding and gasping for breath, yields to his antagonist, and puts an end to the shocking sport. In still another place, fierce dogs, excited, by fiercer men, with fury to fasten on the nose, or tear out the eyes, of a poor confined animal, which pierces the sky with his painful and lamentable bellowings, while the surrounding multitude rends the very heavens with the most horrid imprecations, and repeated shouts of applauding joy; sporting themselves with the very misery which human nature, were it not deplorably corrupted, would teach to alleviate."

Such is the description—not very complimentary—which Fletcher gives of the habits of Madely. The young people were irreligious, reckless, and profligate. They were accustomed

often to assemble for balls, parties, and dances, and spend the night in dissipation and obscenity. He determined to break up these brutal sports and immoral customs. He would boldly break in suddenly on their assemblies, and, in spite of the rudeness and brutality with which he would first be assailed, expostulate with them, and exhort them, till quiet submission to his ministerial authority was produced.

Great opposition was raised against him throughout the parish. The drunkards, and the makers of drunkards, were bitterly offended, because he preached against intemperance. The low and groveling pleasure-seekers were hostile, because he interfered with their amusements. The "gentlemen" did not relish so strict morality as he preached. The neighboring clergy felt reproved by his extraordinary zeal. So all parties combined against him—the "gentlemanly" aristocrat, and the vulgar plebeian—the dancer and the bull-baiter—the scoffing infidel and the professed clergyman. But he boldly marched forward amidst the thickest and most unscrupulous of his foes, relying on truth, zeal, and integrity.

Very few attended the services of the Church. He went from house to house to visit them, and

to exhort, reprove, and warn them. Some utterly refused to admit him to their houses. He would steal upon them, however, unawares, and expostulate with them on their impiety. By energetic and unremitting effort, he succeeded in arousing the attention of the parish, and filling the church. Within the bounds of the parish were several populous neighborhoods, at some distance from the church. These places he visited on week-days, gathered the people together, and preached to them the Gospel, which many of them had not heard for years. In mingling with the people he let escape no opportunity of making a religious impression on them. Officiating on a marriage, he said to the young man, as he was recording the marriage in the parish register, "William, we have recorded your name in this book once before." "Yes, sir, at my baptism." "We shall have to record it yet once again—at your burial. Prepare, William, prepare to meet thy God." He had thus a word for every one. He formed a personal acquaintance with nearly every one in his parish, and thus seemed at no loss to choose a "word in season," for all and on all occasions.

He was ever ready to visit the sick and the

dying. At any time of day, or any time of night, in summer and in winter, in sunshine and in storm, he would rise at the call of distress, and hasten to any part of the parish, to administer consolation to the afflicted. All night long he would stand by the bedside of the sick, to administer to their comfort. To the dying penitent he would offer the consolations of the Gospel, and for the dying sinner he would unceasingly pray, and with him expostulate, and to him offer Christ as the Redeemer. His pastoral visits were often occasions of most thrilling interest. None were neglected; none overlooked by him. Unless the door was closed against him, and kept closed by physical force, he would enter every house in the parish, and converse personally with every individual—advising, instructing, reproving, exhorting, expostulating, or encouraging—suiting his communications to the peculiar social, intellectual, and moral condition of each person. Before leaving the house, he would sing and pray, often naming in his prayer each member of the household, and offering up to heaven most fervent petitions appropriate to the wants of each person. Often the whole household would become overwhelmed with emotion, and tears, prayers, and blessings

would follow his departure. In the populous village of Madely there were many poor, many widows, many orphans. These were the special care of Fletcher. He sought out the abodes of wretchedness and woe. He not only carried to the poor inmates the consolations of the Gospel, and administered to them advice and encouragement, but he bestowed on them all his income, reserving for himself scarcely sufficient for decent clothing and necessary support. When he had exhausted his own resources in providing for their necessities, he would endeavor to enlist in their favor his rich and benevolent friends, not only in his own parish, but in other parishes, and many a bounteous supply of provisions was thus poured into the dwelling of the needy. He carried with him his care for the poor even to his dying bed. As he lay in the last struggle of dissolution, he exclaimed, "O my *poor!* what will become of my poor?"

Not only the poor, but the immoral and the profane were the special objects of his regard. He did not stand aside from them, lest his own righteousness should be tarnished by contact with the wicked. He deemed himself the servant of that Master, who "received sinners,"

and, like his Master, he went about doing good, even to the unrighteous and the evil. He sought out the forsaken outcast, took him by the hand, and endeavored gently to lead him back to virtue. He expostulated with the profligate, and besought him to return to his father's house. He implored blessings on the head of the profane and the scoffer, and tried by love to constrain him to reform. His angelic voice was heard along the public walks and the by-paths, calling on the wanderer to return, and his upraised hand was often seen cautioning the thoughtless, and beckoning back the imprudent. He deemed no sinner too far gone in crime to be recalled by the Gospel, none too low fallen to be raised up, none too depraved to be converted, none too ruinously abandoned to be restored, none too long lost to be saved. He made not—as do some of the ministers of the Established Church—his office the means of oppression. There were in the parish many Quakers, who thought it wrong to pay tithes. He might have constrained them by law, but he never would resort to coercive measures, nor would he even receive tithes from those who were induced by conscience, or compelled by poverty to refrain from paying.

He assumed no airs of personal or official authority, except so far as indispensably necessary to perform the duties of his station. His family, in Switzerland, was noble—allied to the royal house of Sardinia. Yet his friends, in England, having, by accident, received the impression that his father was a common Swiss soldier, in low life, he never took pains to correct it. Even his wife was surprised to learn, some year or two after marriage, by an incidental circumstance, of the noble rank of his family. He moved among the people as one of them, sympathizing in all their sorrows, and rejoicing in all their prosperity. His preaching was simple, plain, yet powerful. The subjects of his sermons, the elegant and felicitous language, the gestures, the tones of voice, the earnestness of manner, all conspired to captivate the attention and affect the heart. Mr. Wesley rated him as a preacher far above Mr. Whitefield. "He had a more striking person; an equally-winning address; a richer flow of fancy; a stronger understanding; a far greater treasure of learning in languages, philosophy, and divinity; and a more deep and constant communion with the Father, and with the Son—Jesus Christ."

His favorite subject of discourse was the love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "O, the depth," he would say, "of the mystery of faith! O, the length, the breadth, and the hight of the love of Christ! All his stupendous humiliation, from the bosom of the Father to the cross on Calvary; all his astonishing exaltation from the dust of the grave to the throne of glory; all, all is ours. His mysterious incarnation reunites and endears us to God; his natural birth procures our spiritul regeneration; his immaculate life restores us to blissful immortality; his bitter agony gives us calm repose; his perfect obedience is our title to endless felicity; his full atonement purchases our free justification; his cruel death is the spring of immortal life; his grave, the gate of heaven; his resurrection, the pledge of glory; his ascension, the triumph of our souls; and his prevailing intercession, the exhaustless fountain of all our blessings. Come, then, sinner, come to the feast of pardoning love. Taste, with us, that the Lord is gracious. Christ is a redeemer, most eminently fitted to restore lost and fallen humanity. He is almighty, and, therefore, perfectly able to restore lapsed powers, root up inveterate habits, and plant

heavenly tempers. He is love itself—compassionate, merciful, pardoning love—become incarnate for thee. See, PARDON FOR LOST SINNERS, written, with pointed steel and streaming blood, on his pierced hands and feet. His open arms invite, draw, and welcome returning prodigals. And in those arms the worst of sinners may find a safe retreat—a real and present heaven. Fly, then, sinner, fly for shelter to the Rock of Ages. Fly to the cross, where thou wilt meet him who was, and is, and is to come—Immanuel—God with us—who appeared as the son of man, to make his soul an offering for sin—for thy sins—and to save thy life from destruction, by losing his own in pangs which made the sun turn pale, shook the earth, and made the opened graves give up their dead."

He delighted to contemplate and to describe the triumphs of Christianity over death, and the glories of immortality. "I had," said he, "lately some views of death. To me the scene appeared in colors the most brilliant. What is it to die, but to open our eyes after the dream of life—after the sleep of earth—on the vivid realities and the bright glories of the spiritual world? It is to break the prison of flesh and blood, and emerge into the free range of spirit-

uality. It is to cast off the vail of materiality, which prevents our seeing the supreme beauty and goodness face to face. It is to lay aside our soiled and worn garments, and be invested with robes of light and immortality."

The following is a most beautiful description of the supreme Being, taken from one of his addresses. "The Creator is all, and the created are mere nothings—passing clouds with which the Sun of righteousness hath thought fit to clothe himself. In an instant he could scatter them to their original nothing, or resorb them forever, and stand, without competition, the BEING. But if the created should stand forever, little signatures of God, they would be, in their most glorious state, only tapers kindled by his light. Conceive a sun—a spiritual sun—whose center is every-where; whose circumference no where: a sun, whose luster far surpasses the brightness of the luminary that rules the days of earth, and then say, what are the twinkling tapers of good men on earth; what the stars of the saints in heaven. The creatures are all lost in the transcendent glory of the Creator."

Fletcher excelled, in the opinion of his cotemporaries, all of his age in piety. Mr. Wesley

says of him, "Within fourscore years, I have known many excellent men—men holy in heart and in life; but one equal to him—one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God, I have not known. A man so unblamable, in every respect, I have not found in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find another such on this side of heaven." In this exalted opinion of his extraordinary moral worth, later writers agree with Wesley. Southey says, "No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity. No Church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister. In any communion he would have been a saint." A writer in the Quarterly Review says, "Fletcher was a man of heavenly temper; a saint, in the ancient and high sense of that term. His enthusiasm was entirely unmixed with bitterness, and his life and death equally edifying." A writer in the Christian Observer says, "Fletcher, of Madely, was a burning and a shining light; a memorable example of the power of Christianity to purify, exalt, and ennoble the character of man." He was pre-eminently a *heavenly-minded* man. His conversation was of heaven. His appearance and intercourse among men would remind us

of the angelic beings whom, in olden time, God occasionally permitted, for a season, to visit the earth. It is impossible, by any description we can give, to convey an adequate idea of his deep piety, his heavenly temper, and his angelic spirit. If the reader will examine his writings, particularly his pastoral and familiar letters, he may form some conception of the amiable and devout character of the man.

It would seem hardly appropriate for such a man, so learned, so eloquent, so exalted in character, to be confined, for life, to such a parish as Madely. Wesley thought he ought to take, as he himself did, the world for his parish. And there is no doubt but his personal influence would have been, on the public mind, quite as effective as that of Wesley. But his ardent local attachment to his people, his humble opinion of his own qualifications, and his feeble health, prevented Fletcher from ever becoming, to such an extent as did Wesley and Whitefield, an itinerant. He did not, however, confine his labors wholly to the parish of Madely. He traveled frequently over an area of several miles in circumference, preaching wherever he could find hearers. He sometimes traveled with Wesley. Retaining his full com-

A Thorough Methodist.

munion in the Church of England, he yet sympathized and labored in harmony with Wesley in all his movements. He was ever considered, in all respects, and to all intents, a thorough-going Methodist, only he did not regularly belong to the itinerancy. His most efficient services to the Methodists were rendered by his writings, of which we shall speak more fully in another place.

CHAPTER III.

FLETCHER ON A CONTINENTAL TOUR.

NEARLY twenty years had passed away since Fletcher, a mere youth, in search of adventure and fortune, had left his paternal home. During this long time he had been so busily intent on what he deemed the great purposes of life, that he could, as he thought, ill afford time to visit his friends in Switzerland. But in 1769 he resolved to go and see his friends. He was prompted to the journey partly by the hope of promoting his health, and partly by the earnest entreaty of the surviving members of his father's family to visit them. His father and his mother were gone to the grave, but he had brothers and sisters yet living, who were longing to see him. Just as he was leaving home the Roman Catholics opened a chapel in Madely, and were drawing to their communion some persons of his pastoral care. He, therefore, felt constrained to defer his journey for a few weeks, for the purpose of warning his people against, what he thought,

the errors of the Catholic Church. He prepared and delivered an able discourse, contrasting the doctrines and usages of the Catholics with the doctrines of the apostles, and the usages of the primitive Christians. This able and well-timed discourse arrested the progress of Catholicism in the parish.

By these circumstances the attention of Fletcher was directed, more carefully than before, to the influence of Roman Catholicism, and he improved every opportunity, in his continental excursion, to observe the condition of Catholic communities.

At Naples, his curiosity was excited by a towering monument, several stories high, erected in honor of the Virgin Mary, whose image stood on the top. On a stone of the monument was engraven this inscription: "Pope Benedict XIV grants a plenary indulgence to all who shall honor this holy image, with privilege to deliver one soul out of purgatory every time they shall pay their respects to this immaculate mother."

At Rome his spirit "was stirred in him," as was Paul's at Athens, by the superstitions of the Catholics. Had it not been for his intimate friend and traveling companion—Mr. Ireland—

who prudently restrained him, he might, by freely expressing his contempt, have involved himself in serious difficulties. Fortunately he could not speak Italian—the language of the people. Could he have addressed the people in their own tongue, he could hardly have been restrained from bearing public testimony against the errors of Popery, and thereby endangering his liberty and his life. He could have spoken in Latin or in French; but in either case his words would have been intelligible only to the priests, and would not the less have brought inexorable persecution on himself, without any benefit to the people. His hostility, however, to Popery, did not exclude from his benevolent heart charity and respect for pious Catholics.

On his journey through France, on foot and alone, he called, one evening, at the cottage of a Catholic family, and solicited entertainment. His request was, at first, refused. On observing, however, his interesting appearance, as he stood at the door, and hearing the sweet tones of his voice, as he pleaded for hospitality, the cottager relented and admitted him. Soon the family became so charmed with his conversation and manners, that they brought out and placed before him the best the house afforded.

The evening was spent in most delightful religious conversation, and closed by prayer, during which, under the fervent and devout supplications of their guest, the whole family became deeply affected. In the morning he departed amidst tears, and prayers, and blessings. The family looked longingly after him, till he had passed along the winding valley out of sight. They reported, among their neighbors, that they had nearly refused admittance, to their house, to a stranger, who proved to be an angel rather than a man.

His tour, on the continent, was made during the time when the French philosophy of the infidel school was beginning to prevail. He often, therefore, fell in company with infidels, who were not often backward in obtruding on others their skeptical opinions. Fletcher never hesitated to take up the gantlet, by whomever thrown. He was armed at all points for the defense of Christianity. He could draw arguments from history, and philosophy, and philology, and nature, and revelation, and pure reason. He understood all the strong points of the defense, and all the weak points of the attack. He sometimes continued the debate, at the hotels, for a week or more, meeting his

antagonist at every point, till he had either silenced or converted his opponent. Sometimes, when a stranger, in his presence, would make some charge against Christianity, he would step forward and require him, as an honorable man, to prove or retract the charge. He managed these controversies so modestly, as well as ably, so respectfully, as well as decidedly, that he never failed to secure the good-will of his opponent.

When he arrived, on his journey over the continent, at the south of France, he turned aside to visit the Huguenots, whose ancestors had been driven, by persecution, into the mountains. He made this traveling episode alone and on foot. "Shall I," said he, "make a visit on horseback, and at ease, to these poor people, whose fathers were driven along the rocks, like partridges, upon the mountains? No; I will visit them under the plainest appearance, and with my staff in my hand." He spent several days with the simple-hearted and devout people, among the mountains, and then returned to Marseilles, where his traveling companion—Mr. Ireland—was waiting for him.

In passing from Rome to Naples, he journeyed along the Appian way. When the car-

riage came upon this renowned road, he ordered the postillion to stop. He said he could not bear to ride over that ground, upon which the apostle Paul had walked, chained to a soldier. He alighted from the carriage, and with his hat in his hand, and his eyes upraised to heaven, discoursed, as he walked along, most eloquently to his traveling companion, on the exemplary life, extensive travels, and astonishing labors of the great apostle; recounting his sufferings when a prisoner, his trials when at liberty, his self-denial, his voluntary poverty, his violent persecutions, his faith, his love, his revelations, and his communion with heaven. He then traced the progress of divine truth and the triumphs of the Gospel, from the days of the apostles to the present times, and closed with a most sublime description of the final consummation of the Christian enterprise. I would that I might listen to such a discourse, from such a man, in a such a place. To travel along the Appian way, on which throng the memories of classic days, and hear the saintly Fletcher, in his own heavenly manner, converse of the virtues, of the labors, and of the sufferings of the great apostle of the Gentiles, mark out the progress of Christianity for two thou-

sand years, and descant on the glories of the millennial day, would be a boon, whose value, to the man of taste and intelligence, could hardly be estimated.

At Naples he saw, in striking contrast, the beauties of nature and the deformities of ignorant and superstitious society.

At Vesuvius he stood on the rim of the burning crater, and saw, far below, the boiling and surging fiery flood, from whose depths came up smoke, and flames, and thundering sounds. He passed on to the disinterred city of Pompeii, which, two thousand years before, with all its houses, and streets, and furnishings, and no one knows how many of its people, had been suddenly overwhelmed by an eruption of Vesuvius; its wealth and its people buried in a grave so deep as to conceal every trace of all that had been, till six thousand generations of earth's children had passed away, when accident discovered the place of the buried city, and curiosity disinterred it.

On their arrival at Nyon, his traveling companion—Mr. Ireland—was greatly surprised at the grandeur of the house, and the costly furniture of the Fletcher family. He had supposed Mr. Fletcher to be the son of a common

soldier, and that the family were of humble origin, and lived in humble style. But he now learned that Fletcher's father was a general officer; that the family was allied to the royal house of Sardinia, and that they lived in princely style. Fletcher remained with his friends but a short time. He, however, improved the opportunity, brief though it was, to preach to his countrymen. He was welcomed to the pulpits of Nyon. He preached with remarkable effect and success. The people were deeply impressed by his eloquence, his varied acquirements, his zeal, his devout spirit, and his heavenly temper. They implored him to remain with them, but he felt impelled to return to his people at Madely. When the time for his departure came, multitudes, weeping, crowded around his carriage, followed him out of the town, looked after him till he was out of sight, and then, disconsolate, returned home, saying, "How unfortunate are we! Our country has produced, in our day, but one angel, and it is our lot to be deprived of him."

In the middle of the summer, 1770, Mr. Fletcher, after an absence of only about five months, arrived home among his people at

Madely. His return to Madely, improved in health, and revived in spirit, was welcomed by the hearty rejoicings of his people.

CHAPTER IV.

FLETCHER AND THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

THAT a man of the saintly spirit and heavenly temper of John Fletcher could ever, by any circumstances, be drawn or impelled into controversy, may seem strange. That he did, however, engage effectively in polemical writing, without losing his Christian charity, or irritating his heavenly temper, proves that doctrinal controversy may not be incompatible with the true Christian spirit.

In the seventh chapter of the sketch of John Wesley, we have given some account of the separation of the Methodists into two parties—the Arminian and the Calvinistic Methodists. The Arminians adhered to John Wesley. George Whitefield became a member, though not strictly a leader, of the Calvinists. Perhaps the honor of leading the Calvinistic Methodists belongs to Lady Huntington. She was a lady of noble family, of great wealth, and of most exemplary piety. By the death of her husband, her fortune fell at her own disposal,

and she used it freely for good. She became a Methodist in early times. On the division of the societies, for doctrinal reasons, in 1740, she became strongly tinctured with Calvinism. There was still, however, much affection existing between her and her friends, and Wesley and his friends. Wesley desiring to promote, as far as possible, harmony among all the Methodists, had softened down the doctrinal asperities between him and the Calvinists, and for thirty years the two parties had moved along with a good degree of harmony. But about the year 1770, Wesley found many of his preachers "leaning too much toward Calvinism." At the conference held that year, an attempt was made by Wesley to correct the "leaning," and to straighten up the preachers. From the minutes of the conversation held at the conference it would appear that, in the opinion of Wesley, the Methodists had leaned too much toward Calvinism: 1. With regard to *man's faithfulness*. Christ had taught them in the Scriptures to speak of faithfulness, and they ought not to be ashamed of the expression. 2. With regard to *working for life*. Our Lord has expressly commanded us to labor for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, and every

believer, till he comes to glory, works for life, as well as from it. 3. The Methodists had received it for a maxim, that "a man is to do nothing in order to justification." This maxim is false. Whoever desires to find favor with God, must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Whoever repents must do works meet for repentance. The minutes then proceeded to affirm that he who believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart, is accepted of God; that even among those who never heard of Christ, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he hath, is accepted; that salvation is not by *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition;* that as to *merit* itself, of which the Methodists had been so dreadful afraid, the true doctrine is, *we are rewarded according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*, and that talking of a justified or a sanctified *state*, tends to mislead men, inducing them to trust in what has been in one moment, whereas we are every hour, and every moment, pleasing or displeasing God, *according to our works*—according to the whole of our inward temper and our outward behavior.

The reader will hardly find any thing in these minutes so very *heterodox*. It is true, as

Wesley's friends concede, and as, perhaps, he would concede, the language is not discreetly guarded. But the sum and substance of the doctrine is surely not inconsistent with what we usually hear from all modern pulpits. Reasonable as the doctrine seems to us, in 1850, yet it gave mortal offense to the Calvinists of 1770, who believed in election, reprobation, decrees, and final perseverance, according to the predestinarian interpretation. Among those who took the most serious offense at the doctrine of the Wesleyan ministers, was the great and the good Countess of Huntington. This devout and benevolent lady had established at Trevecca, in Wales, a college, or theological seminary, for the education of pious young men, of whatever denomination, for the ministry. She proposed to admit those only, who were truly converted to God, and resolved to dedicate themselves to the service of the ministry. They were at liberty to remain there three years, during which time they were to have their education gratis, with every necessary of life, and a suit of clothes once a year. When their education was finished, they might enter the ministry of the Established Church, or of any other Protestant denomination. From

the high opinion she entertained of the piety, learning, and ability of Mr. Fletcher, she invited him to undertake the superintendence of the seminary. He was not expected to leave Madely and reside at Trevecca, but to visit the seminary as often as he conveniently could, to advise with regard to instructors and instruction, the admission and exclusion of students, and to promote the general interests of the institution. In fact, he was expected to serve as the non-resident or visiting president of the college. Mr. Fletcher, highly approving of the lady's design, accepted the office, without fee or reward, solely for the purpose of assisting to train up persons for the glorious office of preaching the Gospel. By his advice, and on the recommendation of Mr. Wesley, Joseph Benson, a young man of fine classical attainments and exemplary piety, was appointed head master of the college. Matters were moving on finely when the Wesleyan minutes made their appearance, and wholly changed the face of affairs. Lady Huntington pronounced the doctrines of the Wesleyan minutes horrible and abominable. She declared that whoever in the college, whether among the students or the faculty, did not fully disavow

the doctrines, must quit the institution. Every Arminian, she said, must quit the college at once. Mr. Benson came forward and avowed his agreement, in opinion, with Mr. Wesley. He did not, he said, and he could not believe the doctrine of absolute predestination. On this he was promptly dismissed from his office. Mr. Fletcher, learning what had occurred, immediately wrote to the Countess, saying, that he held, as well as Mr. Benson, the possibility of the salvation of all men; that if that were what she called Mr. Wesley's opinion, and Arminianism, and if every Arminian must quit the college, he was actually discharged; that he must hold that sentiment, if he believed the Bible true; that he was no party man; that he could not give up the honor of being connected with Mr. Wesley; that if a master was discarded from her seminary for believing Christ died for all, then prejudice was reigning, and charity was cruelly wounded; and that as he entered the college a free man, he must quit it the moment it became a harbor for party spirit. A few days afterward he went to Trevecca, had an interview with the Countess, explained his sentiments, and then took leave of the institution, wishing the lady might find, to preside

over it, a minister in every respect less insufficient than himself.

Immediately after this, the Honorable and Reverend Arthur Shirley, a relative of Lady Huntington, sent forth a circular letter, inviting such persons, both clergy and laity, as disapprove of Mr. Wesley's minutes, and think them injurious to the fundamental principles of Christianity, to meet at Bristol, during the next session of the Wesleyan conference in that city, and go in a body to the conference-room, and insist on a formal recantation of the minutes, and in case of refusal thereof, to sign and publish a protest against the heretical document. It was further urged, in this circular, that it was the duty of each orthodox Calvinist, in opposition to be made to so dreadful a heresy, to prevail on as many as possible, both of the Established Church and of Dissenters, to attend at the time and place, to arrest the further progress of so pernicious doctrines.

So formidable a manifesto against the Wesleyan minutes induced Mr. Fletcher to examine them with more care. Although he thought the doctrine of the minutes stated in a manner not sufficiently guarded and explicit, yet, fearing that the Churches throughout Chris-

tendom were fast verging toward Antinomianism, he judged the propositions should be confirmed rather than revoked. Though, from his habits and temper, reluctant to engage in controversy, yet his sense of duty to the cause of truth, and his regard for Mr. Wesley, unjustly, as he thought, assailed, urged him to buckle on his armor, and march boldly up to the defense of the Wesleyan minutes. He wrote and sent to the press five letters to the honòrable and reverend author of the circular. In these letters he gave a general view of the doctrines of Mr. Wesley. For sixteen years he had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Wesley. He had often heard him preach, had often conversed with him, had held regular correspondence with him, and had read his numerous works in prose and in verse. He had heard Mr. Wesley affirm, on every proper occasion, the doctrine of the fall of man; of his inability to recover himself without the grace of God; of the way of salvation through Christ only; of faith as the only means of receiving the benefits of the righteous life and meritorious death of Christ; of holiness of heart and of life; of general redemption, and of the moral agency of man. He then explained the design

of Mr. Wesley in publishing the doctrinal thesis of the famous minutes. Antinomian principles were spreading ruinously through his societies. The doctrine of justification by faith had been wrested from its proper uses, and made to authorize and sanction the annulling of the law of God. Persons relying on justification by faith alone, had proscribed all morality, and were living in open violation of the laws of God, under the presumptuous pretense that faith alone was required of Christians; that all the sins of the elect—sins past, sins present, and sins future—had been canceled by the atonement; that having once been justified by faith they could never fall from that state of justification, do what they might; and that, in fine, they were absolved from all duty, and secure from all danger. The consequences of such opinions had been most disastrous. The societies, in some places, were nearly broken up and ruined through these delusions.

Mr. Wesley thought that the doctrines of Calvinism—decrees, election, and final perseverance—naturally, logically, and practically, led to these disastrous results. He, therefore, found it necessary to caution the preachers, in

connection with him, against leaning so much toward Calvinism, as to give countenance to Antinomianism, and against so interpreting the doctrine of justification by faith, as to absolve the Christian from all obligation to keep the law of God, and to maintain outward and inward holiness. Mr. Fletcher proves that the propositions of Mr. Wesley's minutes are consistent with Scripture, with reason, with experience, and, moreover, with the articles and homilies of the Church of England, and the concessions of many eminent Calvinistic divines. He proves, lastly, that Mr. Shirley himself, in a volume of sermons he had published, had maintained the very doctrines of Mr. Wesley. He closes his letter by a powerful appeal to Mr. Shirley, expostulating with him on the unkindness of his conduct, in charging, publicly, with dreadful heresy, a gray-headed minister of Jesus Christ—an old general in the armies of Immanuel—a man whom God had made the first and principal instrument in the revival of religion in the Church. Against such a man, Mr. Shirley had invoked the clergy and laity, Churchmen and Dissenters, to demand from him a formal recantation of "dreadful heresies." Was such a course consistent

with the charity of the Gospel dispensation! He implores Mr. Shirley, by the memory of the seraphic Whitefield, the Elijah of God's people, lately translated to heaven, to cease bringing railing accusations against Mr. Wesley, the gray-headed Elisha, continued a little longer on earth. He finally concludes with the following beautiful language:

"May streams, not of the bitter waters, which came the curse, but of the living waters, which gladden the city of God, flow from our catholic breasts, and put out the fire of wild zeal and persecuting malice! May we know when Zion is really in danger, and when the accuser of his brethren gives a false alarm, to disturb the peace of the Church, and turn the stream of undefiled, lovely, and loving religion, into the miry channel of obstinate prejudice, imperious bigotry, and vain jangling! And may we, at last, instead of striving for mastery in the house of discord, unanimously worship together in the temple of peace!"

While these letters, which Fletcher called "A Check to Antinomianism," were in the hands of the printer, the meeting of the conference, to which Mr. Shirley had summoned "all the world," was held. A day or two be-

fore the opening of the conference, Mr. Shirley and Lady Huntington, having had time to grow a little more cool, sent to Mr. Wesley a letter, expressing regret that the circular had been drawn up in unbecoming language, declaring they meant no personal offense, and requesting to be informed, whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Wesley and his preachers to receive, at the conference, a deputation of Christian friends, for the purpose of coming to a better understanding. Mr. Wesley answered, verbally, that he would be pleased to receive a visit from Mr. Shirley and his friends on the third day of the conference. On the day appointed, Mr. Shirley, with a few other Calvinistic friends, proceeded to the conference-room. Mr. Shirley introduced the business by reading his letter to Mr. Wesley, requesting a friendly conference. Mr. Wesley avowed, that he meant nothing, in the minutes of which Mr. Shirley had complained, contrary to the doctrine of justification by faith—the vital truth of Christianity—the doctrine which he had invariably preached for thirty years. He complained he had been treated, in the matter, unfriendly by persons from whom he had reason to expect better things. Mr. Shirley disavowed

all personal unkindness. He had only designed to oppose the doctrine of the minutes, which he had deemed dangerous in their tendency. At his request, Mr. Wesley and the conference signed a declaration, affirming, that in the minutes they meant nothing contrary to the Protestant and evangelical doctrine of justification by faith. Mr. Shirley, then, on his part, signed a declaration, that he had mistaken the doctrine of the minutes. Thus ended the famous meeting, to which the universe had been summoned.

Mr. Fletcher was not at the conference; but when he learned of the modest and friendly behavior of Mr. Shirley, he resolved to prevent, if possible, the publication of the letters in the form in which he had written them. He did not intend to abandon the controversy. It was due, he thought, to Mr. Wesley, to the Methodist societies, to the cause of Christianity, and to the defense of truth, that the Wesleyan minutes should be vindicated; but he thought he might carry on the controversy in another form. He might vindicate Mr. Wesley and the minutes, without naming Mr. Shirley and the circular letter. He, therefore, wrote to the printer to suppress the letters, and offered himself to

refund any expense already incurred. But it was too late: the letters were already printed, and the sale advertised. The "Check to Antinomianism" was, therefore, published in the form in which it was first written; and Mr. Fletcher said, that, though he regretted, while he called himself a lover of quietness, to appear the son of contention, yet he must look on the publication of the letters as a *necessary* evil. Mr. Shirley did not answer the letters. He, however, drew up a narrative of the proceedings in the case, including the minutes, the circular, the letter of apology, the declaratory explanation of Mr. Wesley, and his own declaration of having mistaken the minutes. To all this he added his own reflections on the whole affair. In these reflections, Mr. Shirley recanted the doctrines of his own volume of sermons, from which Mr. Wesley had quoted in the letters, and expatiated largely on some of the points at issue between the Calvinists and Arminians. Though Mr. Fletcher admired the temper and spirit of Mr. Shirley's narrative, yet he deemed some of the doctrines of dangerous tendency; and, therefore, he wrote a reply, in three letters, in which he pointed out the mistakes and errors of the narrative, and

discussed faith and works, free grace and free will. These letters he called the "Second Check to Antinomianism." There occurs in them the following beautiful and eloquent passage: "O, ye halcyon days—ye days of brotherly-love and genuine holiness! should you reappear to pacify and gladden our distracted Jerusalem, how soon would practical Christianity emerge from under the frothy billows of Antinomianism, and the proud waves of Pharisaism, which continually break against each other, and openly foam out their own shame! What carefulness would godly sorrow work in us all! what clearing ourselves, by casting away our dearest idols! what fear of offending God or man! what vehement desire after the full image of Christ! and what zeal for his glory! Then should we see, what has seldom been seen in our age, distinct yet not opposed societies of meek professors of the common faith, walking in humble love, and, like different battalions of the same invincible army, supporting each other with cheerful readiness; and should we ever see any contention among them, it would be only about the lowest place and the most dangerous post. Instead of striving for the mastery, they would strive only who should

stand truest to the standard of the cross, and act best on the motto of the primitive Christians, 'Our religion consists not in great and high-sounding words, but in good works.'"

Mr. Shirley, finding himself too unequally matched against the acute and powerful vicar of Madely, retired forever from the contest; and the attention of Mr. Fletcher was directed to a new opponent, who had appeared, another Richmond, in the field. This was the Honorable Richard Hill—a man of family and fortune—a very worthy and pious man—a man of learning and ability. He had, some time before, published two large pamphlets, one called "Pietas Oxoniensis," or "Oxford Piety," and the other, "Goliath Slain." The subject of these pamphlets, under these fanciful names, was the expulsion, from Oxford, of six students, for praying, and expounding the Scriptures. He published five letters to Mr. Fletcher, in which he attacked the doctrines of Mr. Wesley's minutes, and contended stoutly for the peculiar dogmas of high-toned Calvinism. Mr. Fletcher answered him, in his "Third Check to Antinomianism." This "Check," beautifully written, concludes thus: "Permit me, honored sir, to conclude by assuring you that, though I

have thought myself obliged publicly to show the mistakes in the five letters you have publicly directed to me, I gladly do you the justice to acknowledge, that your principles have not that effect on your conduct which they naturally have on the conduct of hundreds who are consistent Antinomians. Though I have directed my 'Checks' to the Rev. Mr. Shirley and yourself, yet God is my witness, that it was not to reflect upon two of the most eminent characters in the circle of my acquaintance. Forcible circumstances have overruled my inclination. You, thinking to attack error, have attacked the truth, which Providence calls me to defend. The attack appears to me the more dangerous from your laborious zeal and eminent piety, entitling you to public regard. If a wicked man plead for sin, he carries the mark on his own forehead, and we are thrown on our guard; but when a good man maintains, 'that there are no lengths to which God's people may not run, nor any depths into which they may not fall, without losing the character of men after God's own heart; that many will praise God for having denied Christ; that sin and corruption are decreed for good; that a man may fall, as did David, into adultery and

murder, and be a pleasant child of God still, and be driven, by his very fall, near Christ, and be made to sing the louder the song of free grace;' when he quotes Scripture, in support of these assertions, he casts the evil net on the right side of the ship, and is likely to inclose a great multitude of unwary men, especially if some of the best hands in the kingdom drive the frighted shoal into the net, and help drag it on shore. This is what I apprehend you, though undesignedly, have done. This is what I must resolutely oppose; and if I may be permitted to show you that humble mark of brotherly-love, I beg you would not consider the unceremonious plainness of a Swiss mountaineer, as the sarcastic insolence of an incorrigible Arminian. I owe much respect to you, but more to truth, to conscience, and to God. If, in trying to discharge my duty toward them, I have inadvertently betrayed any want of respect toward you, I humbly ask your pardon; and, till we come where no mistake will raise prejudice, and no prejudice will foment opposition to truth—till we meet where all who fear God and work righteousness, however discordant together now, will join in an eternal chorus, and in perfect harmony ascribe a common sal-

vation to the Lamb that was slain, I do declare, in the fear of God and in the name of the Lord Jesus, that no opposite view of the same truths, no clashing divinity of contrary sentiments, no plausible insinuations of narrow-minded bigotry, shall hinder me from remaining, with the greatest sincerity, honored and dear sir, your most obedient and obliged servant, in the bonds of a practical Gospel."

But Mr. Hill did not reciprocate the kind and amiable sentiments of his noble-spirited, generous-hearted opponent. He answered the "Third Check" in six letters, in whose composition he manifested much loss of all good temper, and no increase of argument. Mr. Fletcher replied, in his "Fourth Check to Antinomianism." He commences as follows: "My entering the field of controversy to defend the pure religion of St. James, procured for me your five letters, which I compare to a shower of rain gently descending from the placid heavens; but the six letters which have followed resemble a storm of hail, pouring down from the lowering sky, ushered by some harmless flashes of lightning, and accompanied by the rumbling of distant thunder. When I first read them, I was thunderstruck, and began to

fear, lest, instead of adding *light*, I had only added *heat* to the hasty zeal which I had endeavored to check; but, at the second perusal, the disburdened clouds began to break; the air, discharged of the exhalations which rendered it sultry or hazy, seemed cooler than before; the smiling plain of evangelical truth, viewed through the defecated medium, appeared more gay, after the storm; and, amid the din of controversial war, the voice of the turtle-dove was heard in the land.

"May the gentle sound tune our listening hearts to the melodious accents of Divine and brotherly love! And thou, Prince of peace, should an evil spirit come upon me, as it did upon Saul, to make me dip my pen in the envenomed gall of discord, or turn it into a javelin, to strike my opponent through and through, mercifully bow the heavens! touch the strings of my heart, and play upon them the melting tune of forgiving love! Should I, in this encounter, gracious Lord, overcome, by thy wisdom, my worthy antagonist, help me, by thy meekness, to give him an example of Christian moderation! May we be drawn, in the triumphal car of Gospel truth, to the happy regions, where the *good*, as well as the *wicked*,

cease from troubling, and those who are weary of contention are at rest! May we leave forever behind the deep and noisy waters of strife, in which bigots miserably perish, and the barren mountains of Gilboa, where hurried Saul falls on the point of his own sword, and lovely Jonathan himself receives a mortal wound!" He then, in thirteen letters to Mr. Hill and to his younger brother—Rev. Rowland Hill—who had volunteered, during the controversy, with some "Friendly Remarks," proceeds to make some most powerful strictures on Geneva logic. He most ably and most unanswerably defends the doctrines of Wesley against the charges, and establishes them on the concessions of the honorable and reverend brothers. This "Fourth Check" abounds with the most apt illustrations of the logical consequences of Calvinism. Mr. Hill, on reading it, repented of having engaged in the controversy. With all his ability, which was considerable, he could neither make any visible impression on the doctrinal system he had so unscrupulously attacked, nor sustain against the well-directed strokes of Mr. Fletcher the system in whose defense he had so chivalrously volunteered. He, therefore, addressed Mr. Fletcher a private

letter, proposing to drop the controversy, and to suppress all that had been written on both sides. To this Mr. Fletcher could not consent. He had contended, not for victory, but for truth; and he could not, by suppression, betray the cause in which he had, by Divine call, as he thought, enlisted. When Mr. Hill found his proposition declined, he published another tract, called the "Finishing Stroke." Mr. Fletcher, in the first part of the "Fifth Check to Antinomianism," so successfully warded off the "Finishing Stroke," that it reacted in the face of Mr. Hill, causing him to lose all patience, and retire unceremoniously from the field, declaring he never would read another book of Mr. Fletcher, whatever he might publish.

No sooner had Mr. Hill retired than another champion of Calvinism appeared. This was the worthy and witty vicar of Everton—Mr. Berridge—a personal friend of Wesley and of Fletcher, but a tenacious Calvinist. He published a tract called the "Christian World Unmasked," in which he, in his own peculiar manner, opposed the doctrines of Wesley, and advocated those of Calvin. He stoutly contended for the doctrine of "unconditional perseverance." He represents it as the best-

defended point of Christian doctrine. "The guard," says he, "attending on this doctrine, is Sergeant IF, low in stature, but lofty in significance; a very valiant guard, though a monosyllable. Kind notice has been taken of the Sergeant by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and much respect is due to him from all the Lord's recruiting officers, and every soldier in the army." But Mr. Berridge affirms there is a vast difference between IF and IF—between a Jewish If and a Christian If, a legal If and an evangelical If. The Jewish If, he affirms, exercises the office of conditionality; but the Christian If is a "modest Gospel evidence to prove the truth of grace." Mr. Berridge had much to say, also, of the Arminian doctrine of "sincere obedience," which he called a "paper kite," and of the evangelical law of liberty, which he called a "cobweb."

Mr. Fletcher paid proper respect to Berridge in the second part of the "Fifth Check," effectually disarming the valiant Sergeant, and dismissing the worthy vicar from the field of controversy with a most withering sarcasm of his doctrines, and a most high compliment of his personal character. "Were I," said he, "to conclude these strictures upon the dangerous tenets

inadvertently advanced in the 'Christian World Unmasked,' without professing my brotherly-love and sincere respect for the ingenious and pious author, I should wrong him, myself, and the cause I defend. I only do him justice, when I say that few, very few, of our elders equal him in devotedness to Christ, zeal, diligence, and ministerial success. His indefatigable labors in word and doctrine entitle him to a double share of honor; and I invite all my readers, with me, to esteem him highly in love for his Master's and his work's sake, entreating them not to undervalue his vital piety on account of his wrong opinions, and beseeching them to consider that his errors are so much the more excusable as they do not influence his moral conduct, and he refutes them himself far more than his favorite scheme of doctrine allows him to do. I publicly invite him to my pulpit, protesting I should be edified to hear him enforce there some portions of his book, which, notwithstanding the veins of error I have taken the liberty to open, contains many great and glorious truths."

Some years afterward, when Fletcher was about leaving England on a second tour on the continent for the recovery of his health, he

called on Berridge. As Fletcher entered the room, the good old vicar arose and ran to him, embracing him with folded arms, and, with looks of delight and tears of affection, exclaimed, "My dear brother, this is, indeed, a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other when we both aim at the same thing—the glory of God and the good of souls? But my book lies very quietly on the shelf, and there let it lie."

Having dispatched Mr. Shirley, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Berridge, the valiant defender of the faith turned his attention to another combatant, who had entered the field—Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, vicar of Broad Hembury, in Devonshire, a man of respectable education and talents.

While Mr. Fletcher was engaged with Hill and Berridge, Mr. Wesley published a tract called "Thoughts on Necessity." Soon after the appearance of this tract, Mr. Toplady published an answer to it, entitled, "The Scheme of Philosophical and Christian Necessity Asserted, in Opposition to Mr. J. Wesley's Tract on that Subject." Mr. Fletcher, having determined to pay his respects to Mr. Toplady, turned his attention, therefore, first to the doc-

trine of necessity, the grand error which supports the system of Calvinism.

The Calvinian scheme of philosophical and Christian necessity, as asserted by Mr. Toplady, and other divines of that school, in the time of Fletcher, would appear a chain of seven links. The first link is God; the second, the will of God; the third, fate, or the solemn ratification of his will, by passing and establishing it into an unchangeable decree; fourth, creation; fifth, necessity, or such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes and effects as has a native tendency to secure the certainty of all events, as one wave is impelled by another; sixth, Providence, or the omnipresent, omnivigilant, all-directing superintendency of divine Wisdom and Power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end; and, seventh, all our actions, which are rendered infallibly certain by absolute necessity. This system he attempts to sustain by philosophy and by Scripture. In reply, Mr. Fletcher maintains that the Calvinian doctrine of absolute necessity, when applied to moral agents, is contrary to genuine philosophy, which repre-

sents the soul of man as able to resist the most momentous impressions which act on matter; that it unmans man, by rendering reason useless; that it sets aside and renders useless conscience; that it deprives us of self-activity and self-motion; that it charges all sin on Providence; that it is contrary to common sense; that it is contrary to the sentiment of all the Churches of Christ, except those of Rome and Geneva; that it represents the proceedings of the day of judgment as unrighteous, cruel, and hypocritical; that it places matter and its impressions above spirit and its influences; that it supposes that God, to maintain order in the universe, is *obliged to necessitate all events;* that it degrades all human souls by making them receive their moral excellence and depravity from the texture of the brains in which they work, and from the place of the bodies in which they dwell; and that it makes matter and mind subject to the same principles, and, therefore, of the same nature. All these propositions Mr. Fletcher maintains with aptness of illustration and power of argument.

He then remarks upon the manner in which Mr. Toplady, and other Calvinists, attempt to support their scheme of necessity from Scrip-

ture, and shows that they detach passages of Scripture from the context; that, from the representation of Scriptures that God can do a thing, and, on particular occasions, does perform it, they infer that he does it always; that they confound the Scripture doctrine of man's inability to do *some* things with his inability to do *any* thing; that they extend the application of Scripture metaphors beyond all reasonable bounds; that they press into their service mere poetical and proverbial expressions; that they confound the imperative with the mere declaratory signification of the auxiliary *shall* in certain texts of Scripture; that, in interpreting texts of Scripture, in which some species of necessity is recognized, they confound a *necessity of consequence with an absolute necessity*, a *natural* with a *moral* necessity, and a *prophetic certainty* with an absolute necessity; and that, because the Scriptures represent the fact and the time of the birth and of the death of some persons of sacred history as matters of Divine appointment, the necessitarians conclude, not only that there is an appointed time for every man to be born and to die, but that our every intermediate action, our every thought, and every movement of body or mind, from our

birth to our death, is brought about by the iron hands of absolute necessity.

All these points he sustains by numerous quotations and illustrations, showing the utter absurdity of the conclusions to which the doctrine of necessity leads. After this, he answers the objections which the necessitarians usually make against the doctrine of liberty, and concludes by proving that on the doctrine of necessity Mr. Toplady, the champion of the Calvinists, agrees with Mr. Hobbes, the apostle of the materialists.

Having broken to pieces Mr. Toplady's chain, and scattered the links over the field, Mr. Fletcher turned his attention to another tract. A little while before the appearance of the famous Wesleyan minutes, which gave rise to this controversy, Mr. Toplady published a treatise on the doctrine of absolute predestination, chiefly a translation from the Latin of Zanchius. Mr. Wesley made an analysis of the tract, setting forth, in plain language, the doctrines of the book, stripped of all disguise. Mr. Wesley, in conclusion, summed up the consequence of the doctrine of predestination in these words: "The sum is this: One in twenty of mankind is elected; nineteen in

twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can." On this, Toplady was greatly irritated, and attacked Mr. Wesley in the most virulent manner. He denied that any such consequence followed from his doctrine of predestination. Mr. Wesley replied in a brief tract of about three pages, entitled, "The Consequence Proved." He affirmed that this consequence does naturally and necessarily follow from the doctrine of absolute predestination, as stated and defended by Mr. Toplady. He made a few strictures on Mr. Toplady's tract, and then, having neither leisure nor taste for controversy, turned his antagonist over to Thomas Olivers, whom he deemed fully equal to the combat. Mr. Toplady followed by another tract, entitled, "More Work for John Wesley; or, a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God from the Defamations of a Late Printed Paper, entitled, 'The Consequence Proved.'" When Mr. Hill published his "Finishing Stroke," he commended Mr. Toplady's "Vindication" to Mr. Fletcher's special attention. Mr. Fletcher, having been further informed that many of the Calvinists pronounced Mr. Toplady's "Vindica-

tion" an unanswerable defense of their doctrines, procured the book, and read it for himself. He agreed with Mr. Wesley that the "consequence was proved." The proposition which he proceeds to defend he states thus: "From the absolute and unconditional predestination of some men to eternal life, and of all others to eternal death, it necessarily follows that some men shall be saved, *do what they will*, till the *absolute* and *efficacious* decree of election actually necessitates them to obey and be saved; and that all the rest of mankind shall be damned, *do what they can*, till the *absolute* and *efficacious* decree of reprobation *necessitates* them to sin and be damned." To show the justness of this consequence, he gives the following illustration, which we present the reader as a specimen of his style and manner of illustrating abstruse and vexed questions of theology:

"Fifty fishes sport in a muddy pond, where they have received life. The skillful and almighty Owner of the pond has absolutely decreed that ten of these fishes, properly marked with a shining mark, called Election, shall absolutely be caught in a certain net, called a Gospel net, on a certain day, called the day of

his power; and that they shall every one be cast into a delightful river, where he has engaged himself, by an eternal covenant of particular redemption, to bring them without fail. The same omnipotent Proprietor of the pond has likewise absolutely decreed that all the rest of the fishes, namely, forty, which are properly distinguished by a black mark, called Reprobation, shall never be caught in the Gospel net; or that, if they are entangled in it at any time, they shall always be drawn out of it, and so shall, necessarily, continue in the muddy pond, till, on a certain day, called the day of his wrath, he shall sweep the pond with a certain net, called the law net, catch them all, and cast them into a lake of fire and brimstone, where he has engaged himself, by an everlasting covenant of non-redemption, to bring them all, without fail, that they may answer the end of their predestination to death, which is to show the goodness of his law net, and to destroy them for having been bred in the muddy pond, and for not having been caught in the Gospel net. The Owner of the pond is wise as well as powerful. He knows that, absolutely to secure the end to which his fishes are absolutely predestinated, he must also absolutely secure the

means which conduce to that end; and, therefore, that none may escape their happy or unfortunate predestination, he keeps, night and day, his hold of them all by a strong hook, called necessity, and, by an invisible line, called divine decrees. By means of this line and hook, it happens, that if the fishes which bear the mark of election are ever so loth to come into the Gospel net, or to stay therein, they are always drawn into it in a day of powerful love; and if the fishes which bear the mark of reprobation are, for a time, ever so desirous to wrap themselves in the Gospel net, they are always drawn out of it in a day of powerful wrath. For, though the fishes seem to swim ever so freely, yet their motions are all absolutely fixed by the owner of the pond, and determined by means of the above-mentioned line and hook. If this is the case, says Mr. Wesley, ten fishes shall go into the delightful river, let them do what they will—let them plunge in the mud of their pond ever so briskly, or leap toward the lake of fire ever so often, while they have any liberty to plunge or to leap; and all the rest of the fishes, forty in number, shall go into the lake of fire, let them do what they can—let them involve themselves ever so long in the

Gospel net, and leap ever so often toward the fine river, before they are absolutely necessitated to go, through the mud of their own pond, into the sulphurous pool. The consequence is undeniable, and I make no doubt that all unprejudiced persons see it as well as myself: as sure as two and two make four, or, if you please, as sure as ten and forty make fifty, so sure ten fishes shall be finally caught in the Gospel net, and forty in the law net."

In this treatise of one hundred pages, Mr. Fletcher unceasingly plies his antagonist with the startling, the forbidding, the horrible consequences of Calvinian predestination. He shows the doctrine repugnant to the holiness, the justice, and the mercy of God; and he shows it absolutely inconsistent with the revelations of the Bible. He answers all the arguments of his opponent, and most effectually retorts them against the very system they were produced to sustain.

Mr. Fletcher kept the field long after all his adversaries had retired. He proceeded to explore and to illustrate many parts of Christian doctrine, which, in the hurry and excitement of pitched engagement, had been but slightly surveyed. He published a large and able

work, called, "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism." On this he spent much time—far more than on any other part of his writings. It embraced a historical essay on the danger of parting faith and works, a Scriptural essay on the rewardableness of works according to the covenant of grace, an essay on truth, Scripture scales to weigh the gold of Gospel truth, the doctrines of grace and justice, and the reconciliation. The object of this check was to harmonize the doctrine of faith with that of works, and to furnish "a plan on which all candid and moderate Christians might be able to shake hands." The "Scripture Scales," notwithstanding the quaint title, exhibit the workmanship of a master in theology. No one can look through the treatise without receiving great light on the interpretation of difficult texts of Scripture.

To the "Equal Check" was afterward added the "Last Check," which explains and defends the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection.

I know not where, in the whole range of theology, can be found more readable books than "Fletcher's Checks." The style is exceedingly felicitous, being perspicuous, lively, spirited, and chaste. It is sometimes diffuse, but never

prolix. The argument is legitimate, fair, and generally unanswerable. The illustrations are natural, apt, and original. The spirit is most excellent—most saintly. Fletcher wounds only error. He never loses his amiable temper; never becomes personal; never deals in invective; never reasons unfairly or uncandidly; never assails the character, mental or moral, of his adversary; never impugns the motives of his opponent; and never utters one harsh or unkind word, which, dying, a man "might wish to blot." I strongly dislike controversy—dislike to engage in it—dislike to hear it—dislike to read it; but I have to make an exception from my dislikes in favor of the works of Fletcher. The intrinsic excellences of his compositions compensate for all the evils of controversy.

The influence of his writings has been great and enduring. Settled, and forever settled, among Wesleyan Methodists, are all questions of Calvinian controversy. Never has there since been an occasion, never can there hereafter be an occasion, for inquiring, in a Methodist conference, if we are not "leaning too much toward Calvinism." There has been developed, and placed before the Christian world,

a system of theology combining all the essential doctrines of grace, the doctrines of evangelical truth, the doctrines of the primitive Christians, and of the Reformation, without the abhorrent doctrines of specific Calvinism. Had it not been for "Fletcher's Checks," Antinomianism on the one hand, and Pharisaism on the other, might long since have swept away from England and from America the last vestiges of evangelical truth. Even in our own fair land, especially in New England, Calvinism would long ago, but for Wesleyan Methodism, armed with "Fletcher's Checks," have driven the whole population either to Antinomian bigotry or to *liberal* infidelity. None have received more benefit from "Fletcher's Checks" than Calvinists themselves. Those who never read Fletcher's works, who never saw them, and who hardly know of the man, have yet been not the less benefited by his writings. The Methodist preachers, many of them, like Thomas Olivers, plain mechanics, have, drawing their arguments and illustrations from the exhaustless storehouse of Fletcher, been able so to show up the horrible features of Calvinian predestination as to compel the advocates thereof to explain, modify, and change their doctrines,

till neither Toplady nor Fletcher, could they reappear on earth, and listen to some preacher of the new school, would suspect the "new Divinity" to have any relation to "old Calvinism."

To the memory of Fletcher the Methodist Church owes undying respect and veneration. He did for the Wesleyan theology what no other man—not even Wesley himself—ever did, ever could, or, probably, ever can do. The last century has produced no man of the talent, tact, and temper requisite for such a work as he performed; and he did it freely, generously, and disinterestedly. When Wesley was bitterly reprobated and unscrupulously assailed as driving "a traffic in blunders and blasphemies," as guilty of "Satanic guilt and Satanic shamelessness," as a "contemptible reasoner," as a "rancorous hater of the Gospel system," as an "old fox to be tarred and feathered," and as a "pestilent heretic," and when Wesleyan doctrine was pronounced "*dreadful heresy*," and a compound of "heathenism, Pelagianism, Mohammedanism, Popery, and Ranterism, culled, dried, and pulverized, and mingled with as much palpable Atheism as you can scrape together," the mild, retiring, peace-

loving, and saintly Fletcher stepped out from the quiet shades of Madely, and stood up, "Athanasius against the world," in defense of the gray-haired old man and his doctrines.

The great triumvirate of Arminian Methodism seems each one peculiarly adapted to the work which Providence assigned him to do—John Wesley to travel and superintend the societies, Charles Wesley to make the hymns, and John Fletcher to perfect the doctrines. Each did well his part. Each deserves, perhaps equally, a "place in the memory" of the great Methodist family.

CHAPTER V.

FLETCHER IN SWITZERLAND.

THE incessant labors and studies of Fletcher were beginning seriously to affect his health. In the early part of 1776, at the age of only forty-seven, he had become gray-headed, and was seriously affected with violent cough and spitting of blood. Mr. Wesley thought traveling, especially on horseback, the panacea for all human ailings. He, therefore, invited and advised Mr. Fletcher to take a journey of some months with him, through various parts of England and Scotland. To this Mr. Fletcher agreed, and traveled, during the season, some twelve hundred miles, preaching occasionally, and spending some time at Bristol and other places. In the autumn he was little, if any, better. In the early part of winter he went to Newington, where he was hospitably and most affectionately entertained by his lovely friends, Charles and Mary Greenwood. Here he remained in retirement till the end of April, 1777, when he removed to Bristol, that he

might try the effects of the medicinal waters near that city. Here he remained, with occasional visits to Bath and other places in the neighborhood, till late in autumn. His health, however, continued gradually declining. Physicians and friends became convinced that nothing but a sea voyage and a visit to his native country could restore him. He was induced, also, to consent to the journey, that he might visit a sick and dying sister, whom he tenderly loved, and who had once taken a very long journey to see him, when he was ill in Germany, and whom he had just stopped from coming, the last winter, to nurse him at Newington. Before his departure he made arrangements for the supply of the wants of his parish, in his absence, providing a curate, and adjusting some business matters respecting a house he had built, at his own expense, in Madely Wood, for a school-house for the children, and a meeting-house for the people of that neighborhood to occupy for social worship.

In the early part of December, 1777, Mr. Fletcher, accompanied by his old friend and traveling companion—Mr. Ireland—set out for the continent. Being detained at Dover by a gale of wind, he addressed, in a letter, a

parting blessing to his amiable benefactors—the Greenwood family—at Newington. "Ten thousand blessings light on the heads and the hearts of my dear friends, Charles and Mary Greenwood! May their quiet retreat at Newington become a bethel to them! May their children be born again there! And may the choicest consolations of the Spirit visit their minds, whenever they retire thither from the busy city! Their poor pensioner travels on, though slowly, to the grave. His journey, thus far, seems to have hastened, rather than retarded, his progress to his long home. May every providential blast blow him nearer to the heavenly haven of his Savior's breast, where he hopes, one day, to meet all his benefactors, and among them, those whom he now addresses!"

Sailing from Dover he soon arrived at Calais, and proceeded on, by coaches, to the south of France. The weather was cold, the ground covered with snow, and he was exposed, one day, by the breaking down of the carriage, for several hours, to a piercing wind on a bleak hill-side; yet he constantly improved in health and strength during the journey. He spent the winter in the neighborhood of Marseilles

and Montpelier. The bland breezes of the south brought back to his wan cheek the glow of life. He soon was able to ramble along the sunny vales, and over the green hills of that fair land. Before the winter was gone, he was able to preach, to the great joy of the people at Marseilles and Montpelier.

He was not, while in France, an inattentive observer of the moral and religious condition of the country. "Gaming and dress," said he, in a letter to Wesley, "sinful pleasure and love of money, unbelief and false philosophy, lightness of spirit and love of the world, are the principal sins by which Satan binds his captives in these parts. Materialism is not rare; Deism and Socinianism are common; and a set of freethinkers—great admirers of Voltaire and Rousseau, Bayle and Mirabeau—seem bent on destroying Christianity and government." In the same letter he expresses the opinion, that Popery would certainly fall in France, either during that century or the next, and that God would use the French philosophers and revolutionists to bring about a reformation in France, as he had used Henry VIII to do that great work in England. This opinion proved prophetic. The world knows that

Popery fell in France before the end of that century.

On the opening of spring, Mr. Fletcher proceeded to the residence of his brother, the paternal homestead, at Nyon. The mansion stood on a fine hill at the extremity of the village. The entrance to it was by a long spiral staircase, leading to an old-fashioned hall, on one side of which was a room, appropriated, during his stay, to the saintly invalid, and ever after bearing his name. From the window there appeared a lovely landscape of shady grove, of hill and dale, of vineyards and pastures, and, in the dim distance, the dark range of the Alps. From a knoll, a few paces from the mansion, might be seen the whole expanse of the Lake of Geneva, with the city on the right, the memorable castle of Chillon on the left, and far beyond loomed up the Alpine peaks, which embosom the hospitable asylum of St. Bernard, and the lovely vale of Chamouny. With seraphic emotion would Fletcher gaze on the lovely scene, lit up by the brilliant tints of a gorgeous summer sunset, or reposing under the dreamy influences of noon. The shady grove near the mansion was his favorite retreat for meditation and prayer. One day, while he

was riding through the grove, he came upon a company of children picking strawberries. He began to talk to them. He told them he was their brother, for they all had one common Father in the heavens, whose praises the birds in the wood were then singing. They said they would sing to the great Father as well as the birds, and began to sing some little songs. After he rode away they followed him to the house, and desired to see him. But the family told them Mr. Fletcher would not like to be troubled with children. The little ones wept, and said they were sure he would not say so, for he was their good brother. Hearing, the next day, that the children had called for him, he went out, inquired for them, and invited them to his room. They came every day. He made little hymns for them, and they would sing together. The number increased till more than one hundred came. He then met them in the garden, and sometimes in the wood, where they sang together, and he preached to them till their little souls were sweetly drawn under the influences of grace and love.

The return, after years of absence, to the home of childhood, can but be the occasion of tender remembrances and pensive emotions to

the sensitive soul. Fletcher, angelic as was his spirit, was not above the influences of the changes of earth on the heart. "I am come," says he, "to the home of my youth, to see death make havoc among my friends. I wear mourning for my father's brother, and for my brother's son. The same mourning will serve for my sister, who lies dying on the same bed on which she and I were born, and on which my father and my mother died. How near is life to death!" But hope for the future dispelled the dark shadow that was gathering over his heart. "Blessed be God," adds he, "nearer than life to death is Christ, the resurrection, to the dying believer. Death works in the body—the resurrection through the soul. And the soul is our real self."

Some members of his family were unconverted. For them he felt peculiar anxiety and affection. In a letter to one of his brothers, he thus feelingly expostulates: "Do not reject my brotherly counsels and supplications. We have passed our infancy and our youth beneath the same roof. We have borne the same fatigue and enjoyed the same pleasures. Why should we now be separated? Why should they, who, by nature, habit, and friendship, have been so

long united, be now divided? I am going to the New Jerusalem. Come, my dear brother, and go with me. I am most unwilling to leave you behind. Come, support me; go before me; encourage me; show me the way. I feel the need of a faithful companion and a Christian friend."

During his residence at Nyon, he made occasional excursions into the neighboring regions. With his friend—Mr. Perronet—who had come from England on business, he made a journey to the Alpine regions, in the north of Switzerland. He passed, for near a hundred miles, over mountains of snow and rocks of ice. He traveled along through narrow passes, cut in the snow, on the sides of mountains, whose summits the eye could hardly reach, and on the brink of precipices down whose dizzy sides the most adventurous would hardly dare look. Arriving at the little town, whither his friend's business led him, amidst huge rocks, and mountains piled on mountains, till their summits were hid in clouds, in a climate so severe as to defy the power of clothing or fire to protect from its influence, he exhorted the poor people, and prayed for them, till their chilled hearts were melted with contrition and love.

He told them of the heavenly hills, on whose tops no clouds gathered, along whose sides no storms beat, and whose inhabitants never suffered cold. He pointed to their huge rocks, and told them of the Rock of Ages—the foundation-rock of hope, beyond the reach of the avalanche. He pointed to their streams, now rushing along the rapid, or frozen in the eddy, and told them of the river of the water of life, flowing with its deep and smooth current over the fair plains of paradise, and watering the city of God—the heavenly Jerusalem. He pointed to the wolves, that, driven by cold and hunger from the mountains, had rushed into the village, preying on their flocks and herds, and nearly carrying off their children, and told them of the heavenly fold, guarded by the Son of God—the fold from which the old wolf—the devil and Satan—shall be forever excluded, being bound in chains, and shut up in the prison of hell. The simple-hearted people listened and admired. To them, it seemed as if an angel had come among them, and they had well-nigh done him homage.

He made another excursion alone to visit, at some distance from Nyon, a minister, whose zeal and piety he had heard highly extolled.

Having walked several miles, he saw a great many people gathered about the door of a house. He inquired what was the matter. They told him a poor woman and a little child were dying. He went in and saw a woman lying on her bed, pale, nearly speechless, and apparently dying, and by her side a new-born infant, in violent convulsions. He improved the occasion to preach to the people, who had gathered together at the house of suffering. He told them the story of the fall, of the deplorable effects of sin, of redemption, of Jesus, and of the resurrection. "Jesus," said he, "has all power in heaven and in earth. He has power even to raise the dead. He raised up the widow's son, whom they were carrying on his bier to the grave, and he raised up Lazarus, after he had been four days buried. He is able to save you all from sin. He can save this poor woman and this poor child from death. Come, let us kneel down and pray together, that he would both save you from sin, and those sufferers from death." He then prayed with such fervor, and faith, and power, as are seldom vouchsafed to man. When he arose from his knees the woman's strength was restored, and the child was lying free from convulsion,

Great Amazement. "Portrait of St. Paul."

in a sweet sleep. The people stood amazed. Fletcher looked for a moment on the scene, then quietly withdrew, and passed on his journey. When he was gone the people came to their senses, and inquired one of another, "Who was that?" "Who could it be?" "Where is he?" None knew who he was, or from whence he came, or whither he was gone, and so they concluded it certainly must be an angel. In one sense they were right. It was an angel—an angel of love—a messenger of good, whom God had commissioned on errands of beneficence to the human race. Seldom has humanity been so nearly allied to the angelic beings of the heavenly world as in the person of John Fletcher.

During his residence at Nyon, he wrote that admirable book, the "Portrait of St. Paul." It was written in French, and was, after Mr. Fletcher's death, translated by his friend—the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, of Rockwardine.

In the beginning of March, 1781, he left Switzerland, and arrived in England about the middle of April. His residence, of upward of three years, at Nyon, breathing his native air, rambling over his native hills, and roaming amidst the grand old forests, had nearly

restored his health to its pristine excellence. His pulmonary symptoms had nearly all disappeared, and he returned home renewed and reinvigorated. Why is it that the invalid, pining and dying in a foreign country, so generally recovers, if he returns, in season, to his native home? The child of the sunny south and of the frozen north, drooping, by disease, in our own fair western clime, finds each his health more surely recovered by returning—the one to his sunny plains, and the other to his bleak hills. And should a native of the Wabash find his health declining by a residence either in New Orleans or New York, he might find a return to his native prairies the means of his restoration. Give, then, the pulmonary invalid to breathe again his native air. We can not explain the efficacy of a return, when suffering pulmonary affections, to our own native land; but the fact is proved from a long course of observation.

CHAPTER VI.

LAST DAYS OF FLETCHER.

MR. FLETCHER, on his return to England, began to deliberate seriously and prayerfully on marriage. Early in life he had been introduced to Miss Bosanquet, a lady of a spirit as seraphic as was his own. A tender sentiment toward her at once sprung up in his heart. Her image, he says, pursued him for some time, till he began to think more favorably than ever before of marriage. It would appear, also, that the lady entertained toward him a similar sentiment. They were congenial spirits, and, when once they met, they felt the influence of mutual affection. To that influence they should have yielded. An early marriage would unquestionably have increased the happiness and the usefulness of both these estimable persons. But Mr. Fletcher seems to have been averse to marriage, from the opinion that he could be more useful to his parish and to the world by devoting his whole heart, time, and fortune, unincumbered by family claims,

to pastoral duties, writing, and deeds of beneficence and charity. He chose not, therefore, to cultivate an intimacy with one whose excellent virtues must, if often exhibited before him, tend strongly to reverse the decision which he had made to lead a single life. Miss Bosanquet, when Mr. Fletcher first met her, was about twenty-two years old. She was a lady of ample fortune and great benevolence. At her residence in Leytonstone she opened an asylum for the poor, the rich, and the orphan. To these she devoted her time, her heart, and her fortune. Mr. Wesley often visited Leytonstone, and he speaks of the establishment with admiration. It appeared to him the only perfect specimen of a Christian family he ever saw. It seemed fully to meet his most cherished *beau ideal* of an earthly paradise, in which moral beauty was pre-eminent. Here Miss Bosanquet spent the prime of womanhood in acts of heavenly charity, while Fletcher was laboring not less efficiently and benevolently at Madely. For twenty years each thus labored alone in different spheres. They sometimes heard of the labors and trials of each other. They rejoiced each at the success and wept each at the sorrows of the other. Each

was conscious of the tender sentiment of the heart toward the other, but endeavored to turn the whole current of affection toward heavenly things, cheerfully sacrificing all personal considerations to the interest of humanity and the glory of God. They had, during all this time, no intercourse and no correspondence with each other. I know not as they ever once met during the twenty years.

Mr. Fletcher, on his return from Switzerland, in 1781, visited Miss Bosanquet at her own house. She received him as one restored from the dead. They freely conversed together, and felt mutually the renewed influences of congenial sentiment and reciprocal affection. After a few days of intimacy, Mr. Fletcher made her proposals of marriage. To accept, without hesitation, was in accordance with her own heart, her own judgment, and her own conscience. Mr. Wesley highly approved of the engagement. There was not, he said, another person than Mr. Fletcher in the world to whom he would have been willing to see Miss Bosanquet joined. But he was persuaded this union was of God. The marriage was celebrated on the 12th of November, 1781, in the parish church, near the lady's residence. A happier union

has seldom, if ever, occurred. Two spirits more congenial never met in the pathway of human life. Their union was a source of ineffable happiness to themselves, and a blessing to the people among whom they lived.

Mr. Fletcher resumed his station at Madely with good health, renewed zeal, and fine prospects. His pulmonary complaints were all removed. He became young again. He entered into his pastoral labors with more efficiency than ever, even in the halcyon days of youth. He stood up boldly against vice. He established six Sunday schools in different parts of the parish, giving his own personal attention to their management. He preached with more power and more effect than in the earlier years of his ministry. His friends had reason to hope that yet, for twenty years or more, he might remain a shining light, dispensing rays of beauty and of love on all within the sphere of his action. But Providence appointed otherwise, and Fletcher early passed away.

In the early part of the summer of 1785 he seems to have become strangely impressed with a presentiment of his approaching dissolution. He was deliberating on making a visit to Lon-

don. Being doubtful of the expediency of the journey, he knelt down and prayed for direction from Heaven. As he arose from his knees he seemed to hear these mysterious words: "Not to London, but to the grave!" Instinctively shuddering, he exclaimed, "The grave! the cold grave! the cold grave!" In a short time he proceeded to the church, to attend the Sabbath service. A part of the service, on that occasion, consisted of a beautiful anthem taken from the twenty-third Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full." While these words were sounding forth from the lips of the devout worshipers, accompanied by the deep and full tones of the pealing organ, peace and joy—profound peace, unutterable joy—filled his soul; and from that hour death to him lost its terrors, and the grave its gloom. On Thursday, the fourth of August, he was

laboriously employed in the duties of his ministry from three in the afternoon till nine at night. When he came home, he said, "I have taken cold." He, however, paid no further attention to it. Friday and Saturday he continued ill. Saturday night he had much fever. Sabbath morning Mrs. Fletcher entreated he would, by no means, think of going to Church. But he said it was the will of the Lord, and went. He opened the reading service with apparent strength; but before he had proceeded far, his countenance changed, his speech faltered, and he appeared fainting. The eye of affection was on him. His devoted wife sprang forward, in the midst of the crowd gathering around, caught him in her arms, and supported him till he recovered. Conscious that his end was near, that this was the last time he should address his people, he struggled on with the service, though earnestly entreated by his wife to desist. Having finished the introductory service, he reposed awhile in his chair, then arose, and preached with even more than usual effect and power. His theme was the love of God. He expatiated on its glories, its unfathomable depth, its illimitable extent, its eternal duration, and its wonderful influences, till his

soul seemed exalted to the transcendent glories of life and immortality. The effect of the discourse on the people was overwhelming. Through their inmost souls the sounds of his voice

> "Thrilled as if an angel spoke,
> Or Ariel's finger touched the string."

They knew the hand of Death was on their pastor. They saw in his face the outbeaming light of the heavenly world. After the sermon, he proceeded to the communion-table, saying, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy-seat." In going through with the communion service he became repeatedly exhausted; but, the strength of the spirit triumphing over the weakness of the body, he would rally, and again proceed. The people were deeply affected. They saw their pastor offering up the last, languishing remains of a life that had been lavishly spent in their service. They wept, and cried aloud. With his dying hands he distributed the consecrated memorials of his dying Lord. In the course of the service he gave out several verses of hymns, and delivered many affectionate exhortations to the people. Having struggled through the Sabbath service, of nearly four

hours' continuance, he proceeded, by the aid of his friends, to his chamber, from which he went forth no more till his inanimate body was carried on the bier to the grave. He lingered through the week. The next Sabbath morning came—a beautiful summer, Sabbath morning—the 14th of August, 1785. The people assembled in the church for worship; but their pastor lay in his room, speechless and dying. They seemed to hear still that voice, whose tones fell so sad on their hearts the last Sabbath. It seemed

> "Like an echo that hath lost itself
> Among the distant hills."

They sang a hymn of supplication for his recovery. It was accompanied by one simultaneous burst of grief from every heart. After service, the people lingered about the parsonage, and seemed unwilling to leave, till they had looked once more on the face of their expiring minister. Their desire was granted. The door of the chamber was thrown open. Just opposite the door, sitting upright in his bed, in full view, unaltered in his venerable and seraphic appearance, appeared the dying servant of God. The people passed along the gallery one by one, pausing, as they passed the

door, to look, for the last time, on him whom they loved. They then went to their homes, and sat down in silence and in grief, awaiting the deep tones of the muffled bell to tell them all was over.

In the chamber of death the last scene was approaching. The dying saint lay composed as the child when he sinks to his evening rest, as the last sound of the mother's lullaby dies away on his ear. Not a word was spoken; not a sound was heard in the room. His devoted wife was kneeling at his side. A friend was at his head, and another at his feet. Their eyes were riveted on him. They saw his head gently recline toward his breast. They stretched out their hands, and he was gone.

Thus, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, died John Fletcher; and long will it be ere another like him shall appear among the children of earth.

END OF VOL. II.